

**Reading for Academic Purposes: Techniques and Strategies
to help Angolan ELT Students at ISCED-Benguela
enhance their Reading Skills**

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Dedicated to

My wife

Teresa Epaco Chirula

&

My beloved kids

Greibi, Edimíl, and Clarice.

For both your understanding and the greatest
emotional support I have been provided with
while away from home.

My greatest LOVE to YOU!

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ABSTRACT

Reading for Academic Purposes: Techniques and Strategies to help Angolan ELT Students at ISCED-Benguela enhance their Reading Skills.

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This paper examines academic reading difficulties Angolan second year ELT students have at ISCED (Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação) in Benguela and focuses on a variety of reading strategies and techniques as well as models for reading materials to help improve academic reading skills. Finally, it recommends the use of appropriate reading strategies and techniques, materials, and the adoption of a more student-centred approach in teaching reading to encourage the development of a reading culture for academic purposes.

KEYWORDS: Academic reading, reading strategies and techniques, reading materials, reading skills, Angolan ELT students.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho examina as dificuldades da leitura académica dos estudantes do segundo ano de Didáctica do Inglês no ISCED (Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação) de Benguela e foca numa variedade de estratégias e técnicas de leitura assim como textos modelos para melhorar as competências da leitura académica. Finalmente, o mesmo recomenda o uso de métodos apropriados no ensino da leitura para incentivar o desenvolvimento de uma cultura de leitura para propósitos académicos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Leitura académica, estratégias e técnicas de leitura, textos de leitura, competências de leitura, estudantes angolanos da Didáctica do Inglês.

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INTRODUCTION

Citizens of modern societies must be good readers to be successful. Reading skills do not guarantee success for anyone, but success is much harder to come by without being a skilled reader. (Grabe, 2009:5)

Paying careful consideration to the quote above, our common sense tells us that any person living in today's society and maintaining social interactions in varied domains may be subjected to experience a kind of illiteracy threat as a result of lacking reading abilities.

When we first start thinking about reading, we may regard it as an activity that has to do with understanding written texts, which is not the only case. The concept of reading, according to Pang et al. (2003:6), entails a complex and interactive process elaborated through word and/or symbol recognition and comprehension that involves both perception and thought. The ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables us to gain new knowledge as well as read for pleasure, and do other things that are elements of modern life, such as reading academic texts, newspapers, emails, the Internet, instruction manuals, maps and other sources of information. For these reasons, people expect to read in many different settings varying from informal to formal ones, which in turn determine the kinds of reading genres, their purposes and the strategies to be employed in reading.

Reflecting on the complexity of reading as a process and as a skill, many scholars have been led to conduct researches, explore classroom practices and participate in debates in this respect to support the use of a balanced approach in instruction, in order to help students read more effectively in academic environments. Academic reading is a crucial element mostly for higher education. It is probable that students may have been guided and supported by teachers in the previous levels of their studies, but at the university level there are greater expectations and requirements, which should lead to wider and more independent reading.

Considering the perspectives mentioned above, this work focuses on exploring reading problems Angolan students of English Language Teaching (ELT) have at Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação (ISCED)-Benguela, and suggests techniques and strategies to help them overcome those problems.

The students in question learnt English in the context of English as a Foreign Language at schools or/and in language centres, and they are training to be English

teachers in secondary schools. Their age range varies from 20 to 35, with mixed language abilities ranging from Intermediate to Upper Intermediate levels equivalent to B1 to B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels. They interact with reading texts in English in a set of subjects they have during their course such as Psycholinguistics, Phonetics and Phonology, Methodology, and Reading Skills. In these subjects, English is the language of instruction.

Regarding the problem we intend to investigate in this work, two fundamental questions are raised:

- Why can most Angolan ELT students at ISCED-Benguela not understand or interpret their reading materials well enough to avoid poor results in the main course subjects taught in English?

- What can be done to help these students to read efficiently and achieve better results?

The answers to these questions are vital to produce a number of possibilities to provide effective support for students in order to overcome their reading difficulties. Therefore, we intend to present some techniques and strategies based on theoretical foundations that can potentially be proved to work. Thus, the structure of the work has been arranged in three chapters:

The first chapter will focus on the Literature Review i.e. the theoretical background beginning with a definition of reading. Next we will examine the nature of reading as a process as well as a skill, some theories of reading, the differences between reading in the first language and reading in a foreign language. In the following sections we will try to weigh up the more efficient techniques and strategies to improve the skill of reading for academic purposes. We will also look at what is meant by reading fluency, reading rate, and comprehension as well as a discussion on critical reading skills, and the methodological approaches to teaching such skills.

The second chapter will be devoted to the Research Methodology used to investigate the students' abilities in reading for academic reasons, and it will cover the questionnaire applied, the participants, the overview of the study and the methods used. The presentation of the outcomes as well as an analysis and discussion of the findings will be given and will be looked at in relation to the theories presented in Chapter 1. We

will also carry out an interview with teachers to gather some information on the students reading difficulties.

The current “Reading Skills” course comprising four main units (Vocabulary, Comprehension, Interpretation and evaluation, and Basic study skills) taught in second year ELT classrooms at ISCED to help students with their readings in other subjects, will also be analysed and evaluated here. The aim is to question if the course meets the students’ needs or not, and also to measure the extent to which it can be effective for improving academic reading.

The third chapter will consist of two sections: firstly, a description of the new reading materials developed according to the findings of the questionnaire and the theoretical review; secondly, the proposed implementation of new reading materials. This is followed by conclusions and some recommendations.

With the findings of the present research we attempt to address the problem and answer the proposed research questions in order to give as many benefits as possible, both theoretical and practical, to teachers and students. Hence, the critical evaluation of current practice of the "Reading Skills" course (see Appendix A), which includes reading for academic purposes, and the proposed new materials will:

- a) provide the teacher of the "Reading Skills" course with a more solid theoretical background and with examples of practical activities involving techniques and strategies to apply in reading classrooms in general,
- and
- b) assist the students with more efficient and effective reading techniques and strategies, and provide reading materials that are more closely related and suitable for their course in order to boost motivation and build reading competency.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter centres on the theoretical background to reading in support of the research into difficulties Angolan ELT students at ISCED - Benguela have in academic reading. It entails six main sections. The first section looks at the definition of reading, followed by a description of its nature in the second section, which includes the discussion on reading as process and as a skill. The third section examines three main theories of reading: skills model, psycholinguistic model, and the schema-theoretic model, with reference to their impact on teaching and learning reading skills; and section four looks at the differences and similarities between reading in the first language and reading in the second or foreign language. The fifth section covers the purposes of academic reading encompassing reading for instruction/learning, and information, reading genres i.e. types of texts involved in reading, some efficient reading techniques and strategies to improve reading skills, the relationship between reading fluency, reading rate, and comprehension, critical reading skills in academic contexts, and the significance of reading strategically. The last section gives a careful consideration to some methodological approaches applicable to teaching reading skills with regard to the selection of reading materials, the stages of a reading lesson, the teacher's role in a reading lesson, and the assessment process in developing reading abilities.

1.1. Defining reading

Reading, in broad terms, can be basically understood as an activity involving perception of a written text to comprehend its content (Schmidt, 2002:443). An academic definition by Grabe (2009:5) underlines reading as a part of academic life that is expected to provide unlimited knowledge from informational written materials, including assignments or tasks necessary for the achievement of academic success.

In other words, reading can be seen as an indispensable prerequisite for success not only in academic environments but also in today's world in general. It can also be regarded as an interactive process that requires construction of the meaning of texts from printed symbols, which implies being actively immersed in the process to achieve reading comprehension as the elementary goal of reading. These definitions are a good clue to understanding the nature of reading examined in the following section for both reading teachers and students in this research context.

1.2. The nature of reading

As is common knowledge reading appeared among humans only a few thousand years ago and since then, as Wolf (2007:3) proclaims, it has become an important device in many and varied contexts, reshaping the way we think and react to written symbols encountered on a daily basis. Obviously, this is due to many reading situations we are exposed to in modern societies such as the need for social realisation in general, and more specifically the academic field where demands for reading-based learning is much higher than in other situations.

It is also important to mention that reading is not solely a skill we need to learn in order to understand contents in texts but also, as Wiener & Bazerman (1994:67) say, an interactive process that calls for an unceasing mental exercise that does not confine itself to recognizing words on a page but also to what the reader's mind generates and apprehends from the ideas made up by those words. In addition, it is vital to remember that a reader is not an empty entity to absorb all information found in a reading text without associating it with the world they are familiar with. This idea denotes the need for a link between what is found in the text and the reader's prior knowledge or experience, and the thought resulting from such a connection. For a better perception of how that link occurs, the following section introduces a discussion which will clarify this with while contrasting it with reading as a skill.

1.2.1. Reading as a communicative process and Reading as a skill

Being an active reader is a very important part of being a lifelong learner. It is also an ongoing task. Good reading skills build on each other, overlap, and spiral around in much the same way that a winding staircase goes round and round while leading you to a higher place. (Glencoe, 2002:R78)

Drawing attention to the definition presented in section 1.1. and the quotation above, it is reasonable to refer to reading as a communicative process as well as an activity or a skill for the role it plays in communication and the ability most successful readers develop to learn from printed materials.

According to Grabe (2009:16), there are a set of complex processes such as evaluative, strategic and comprehending, that deserve reflection in attempting to define reading depending on the reader's purpose. However, despite the difference each process tries to introduce, Urquhart & Weir (1998:22) affirm that the chief target is to receive and understand information converted in language form through the medium of print.

Moreover, the reception and interpretation of information from printed materials implies interaction between the reader and the text by means of relating information in it to what the reader already knows (process involving techniques and strategies) projected to produce reading comprehension (product), which is the fundamental objective of reading.

All in all, it is an imperative need for ELT teachers to help students in our context to realise how reading serves a communicative purpose in academic environments and become conscious of the fact that this purpose will only be effectively attained if the abilities to read are well developed and implemented according to their needs and purposes that are to some extent determined by tenets supporting the reading process.

1.3. Theories of reading

Alderson (2000:16) says that research on the reading process has increasingly been the centre of attention for many experts to understand its governing tenets and their views on reading and a number of theories have been presented to explain how the reading process works. However, in this paper we are drawing attention to three fundamental theories: the skills, the psycholinguistic, and the schema-theoretic models, to examine their similarities and dissimilarities, and to determine whether they are markedly different or stand for a general theory of cognitive development specially applied to reading. We are referring to the theories as models to particularly represent the psycholinguistic processes as crucial elements involved in the interpretation and comprehension of written materials by the human mind.

1.3.1. Skills model

The traditional interpretation of reading according to Sheridan (n.d:66) influenced the teaching of reading by separately defined comprehension skills in a logical and sequential order aiming to develop comprehension of materials in print. This model views reading as a bottom-up processing approach. And clarifying this, Alderson (2000:6) says that this kind of processing deals with recognition of letters and words from left to right to decode the meaning and the relation to other words in the sentence leading to text comprehension. Furthermore, Alderson relates bottom-up processing model to behaviourism and to phonics model of teaching reading, which emphasises the recognition of group of letters before one can read words. The perspective it stands for

is grounded on the traditional perception of the passivity of the reader towards the printed symbols, and this assumption is noticeably refuted by psycholinguistic theorists since it tends to regard the reader as an empty entity and reading as a linear, mechanical activity.

1.3.2. Psycholinguistic model

Opposing the view of passivity of the reader in the bottom-up model, this one, as stated by Alderson (2000:17), is a conceptually driven model where the emphasis is on prediction of meaning. It sees the reader as an active agent who brings contributions to what is read by means of using strategies and techniques like guessing and predicting basing on the reader's existing knowledge and experience about the reading topic. In addition, Goodman (1982) influenced by this view, looks at reading as a psycholinguistic game which implies readers interaction with words and ideas they find in texts and the adjustment they make to what is already known in order to interpret and understand the contents better. In short, this model essentially points toward the reader's use of prior knowledge and experience with language to get meaning from print (a top-down model).

1.3.3. Schema-theoretic model

Considering the theories discussed above it is clear that the former focuses on recognition of words to construct meaning and understand texts, the latter defends contribution of the reader's knowledge to the information in the text for better comprehension. However, it is to some extent difficult to separate the recognition of words from the knowledge or experience we have about the language, and the reading topic for effective interaction. Thus, a recent theory of reading 'the schema-theoretic model' which underlines interaction between the reader and the text (interactive model) as Alderson (2000:18) explains, emerges to glue the gap left by the previous models to adequately characterise the reading process. The underlying assumption of the present model is that meaning does not exclusively lie in the print itself, but it interacts with the cognitive structure or schemata already present in the reader's mind. So, it is fair to conclude that all elements involved in the reading process call for an interaction among themselves which leads to the parallel processing of information rather than the serial one. In here, both the linguistic input and the world knowledge are taken into consideration.

In other words, theories of reading can provide a range of necessary information to understand how the reading process works with regard to students' behaviour towards the process, and how teachers should act on it. In the final analysis, these theories support ELT reading teachers to explore the most efficient methodologies from materials selection to the actual action taken in the classroom taking into account discrepancies between reading in one's own language and in second or foreign language.

1.4. Reading in L1 vs. reading in L2 or FL

The issue of similarities and dissimilarities between reading in the first language (L1) and in the second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) depending on the context the language is learnt, and the influence one is likely to have on the other, needs a careful consideration starting from the fact that elements like linguistic knowledge, world knowledge, and the strategies used in reading, have a strong impact on how texts are comprehended. So, trying to introduce an examination of these elements, one important point made by both Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990 and Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001 (cited in Jiang, 2011) refers to the fact of reading in a second language not being a monolingual event; L2 readers use their first language knowledge and reading experiences as a resource to enhance their comprehension when they read. In point of fact, this is an evidence in most Angolan ELT students at ISCED-Benguela. They tend to transfer their knowledge and reading habits from Portuguese to reading classes in English, which has been helpful in some way but also misleading in many circumstances because of the mismatches between the two languages.

A particular L1 primarily differs from an L2 in linguistic terms, for example, morphology and syntax, and this difference is an important factor to consider in L2 reading development. From this incompatibility Grabe (2009:130) assumes that L1 and L2 reading are dissimilar in many ways. He indicates three main differences: linguistic and processing differences, cognitive and educational differences, and sociocultural and institutional differences. The first differences have to do with the linguistic resources that L2 readers need for better comprehension because of starting interaction with reading materials later than those who have that L2 as their first language. This denotes less exposure to print and experience with the language for L2 readers, pointing toward cognitive and educational differences, poor linguistic background and lack of automaticity for processing information, which leads them to understand texts with

more effort. The third difference is based on the cultural contexts of the society in which a learner is integrated and the institutions where they develop their cognitive abilities through texts and experiences related to their culture.

Summing up, L2 reading does not solely depend on the linguistic resources and the educational background of a learner, it is also influenced by the cultural contexts where a learner is expected to behave in a particular way; this fact places students in this study in a less favourable position since English is a foreign language for them and essentially used in the academic context.

1.5. Academic reading

Reading academically is a crucial element for students' success. It differs from reading comics, novels, and magazines, for example, in many ways.

In higher education there is a much greater expectation and requirement to read more independently and more widely than in the previous educational levels. Here, as Ruddell & Unrau (1994) cited in Schoenbach et al. (1999:38) say, the reader is required to produce a mental representation of the text, pay attention to divergences that arise as they interact with texts, monitor their comprehension, and draw on a range of strategies to readjust their understanding, and evidence their ideas, views, and opinions through critical thinking. On the contrary to these expectations and requirements, Hyland (1989) cited in Kral (1995:104) argues that many foreign language students at this level of education despite the immeasurable efforts they might invest in FL reading, most of the time face problems with interpretation of individual words in texts and the cultural-based interpretations which potentially makes them feel less confident of the reading procedures they use. These difficulties are more likely to stem from the fact that FL reading classes are often used to improve learners' linguistic competence rather than developing their reading skills as such. Thus, Hyland goes on to say that teachers should do their best to drive students towards independent and efficient academic reading by making reading tasks clearer and more interesting, and helping them to focus their efforts on specific purposes i.e. adjusting their reading strategies to purpose. However, it is vital to remember that these strategies do not simply develop naturally from intensive reading effort; they need a great deal of tasks and practice of skills as well as exposure to a huge range of print in FL reading classes. Thus, making an effort to assist our students, some reading materials will be designed to help them through tasks and

intensive practice, to explore the reading strategies they are expected to master and under these circumstances their reading purposes will be more rapidly accomplished.

1.5.1. Purposes of academic reading

Reading is a purposeful activity. Purpose represents a crucial element for guidance in reading to help determine the choice of reading materials and appropriate strategies to apply, so that the reading goal is successfully attained.

Grabe (2009:8) points to many purposes for reading; among them we refer to reading for pleasure, entertainment, reading for learning or instruction, and reading for information. However, in this work, we will predominantly focus on the two last ones, which in our view, are more closely related to academic reading.

1.5.1.1. Reading for instruction/learning

In academic contexts, reading is strongly connected to learning or instruction. It is a significant academic activity through which students look for information needed for their studies or necessary to be used as a tool to solve a problem. Reinforcing this statement, Carver (1992a), Enright et al. (2000) cited in Grabe (2009:9) claim that this type of reading is done intensively and carefully in the way that content is expected to be absorbed in detail so as to enable its effective recall. A very practical example of this in the ELT context is when students read for assignments and examinations.

On the other hand, as reading is not confined to being aware of linguistic elements if the intention is to comprehend, reading for learning or instruction also involves the skills of thinking critically. Critical thinking skills, according to Facione (2000:61), have to do with the abilities to think reflectively on situations in search of possible solutions. In reading, these skills are used to evaluate, select, synthesize, and integrate information into the knowledge the reader is already familiar with. However, this does not block the possibility of learning from reading for general comprehension, but the chance of meaningful interaction between the text and the reader here is reasonably low due to the FL-related factors like the sociocultural component which is influential to reading fluency.

1.5.1.2. Reading for information

In academic contexts students are generally required not only to read for information they are expected to have in order to deal with their course of study but also

they can read other related information to enlarge their knowledge background which is an important support to help them understand the world around them. According to Guthrie (1988) and Guthrie & Kirsch (1987) cited in Grabe (2009:8), the way we read for information involves both the skills of skimming and scanning that allow us to search for information efficiently. The former as Wallace (1980:27) affirms, is to get an overall impression of what is read and the latter is to locate specific information for a particular question, for example. These skills can be applied either combined or isolated in relation to each other, depending on the demand or relevance of the reading content to the reader.

Both the above purposes of reading are essential in the context under study and as a result they need to be focussed on in some detail when the course materials are designed. Moreover, given these points, a concern about the structure of reading texts can substantially impact the way ELT students will read different materials.

1.5.2. Reading genres

The interest in describing the rhetorical structure of different text types is firmly connected to the continuous need to improve reading strategies. If we consider the definition of genre by Richards & Schmidt (2002:244), it is sensible to understand that reading genres refer to types of discourse that take place in written texts with typical characteristics and principles of organization reflecting a specific function of communication. Some examples are romantic novels, academic papers, scientific reports, newspaper articles and textbooks, each with an appropriate style of presenting information.

In an attempt to understand the relevance of being familiar with different reading genres, the following quotation from Alderson emphasises its significance from the viewpoint of cognitive psychology.

Knowing how texts are organized – what sort of information to expect in what place – as well as knowing how information is signalled, and how change of content might be marked – has long been thought to be of importance in facilitating reading. (Alderson, 2000:39)

Bearing in mind the fact that comprehension depends on the reader's ability to relate what is being read to a known pattern or schema, this quotation influences us to believe that assisting the reader to correctly identify and organise information into a predictable structure through the knowledge of genres provides a kind of structure scheme that supports quick evaluation of a text, which in turn increases students'

skimming and scanning abilities. In short, knowing text genres will help our research population to familiarise with different text types which will enable them to identify suitable materials for their context from which they will select appropriate strategies to apply while reading.

1.5.3. Efficient reading techniques and strategies

Academic reading requires efficiency on the part of students to cope with loads of substantial materials in their area of study. It differs from the kind of reading we do for pleasure or entertainment.

Applying an appropriate and effective reading technique or strategy is one of the most difficult challenges students face at all levels, given the fact that reading styles vary from person to person. Depending on the purpose, Wallace (1980:9) stresses that no single reading technique or strategy is applicable to all materials. The reading purpose is what defines the reading techniques needed for reading success. Therefore, students should choose the style of reading that best suits their task.

There are many reading techniques and strategies but we are focusing attention only on some of them at this point, such as skimming, scanning, intensive, and extensive reading, for the reasons mentioned below.

1.5.3.1. Skimming

Efficient readers approach every reading task with a clear purpose and with flexibility to adjust reading strategy to the purpose at hand. Skimming is a quick reading strategy of glancing through a text to find its general idea. In skim reading we quickly take the main idea of the content we read, without absorbing or looking at every word in the text. That is, we get the gist of what is written. Furthermore, according to Reading & Study Skills Lab (n.d) skim reading is a more text-oriented form of surveying which involves recognising the parts of a text with the most important information such as titles, subtitles, introduction, headings, subheadings, words in special print, visuals, first and last paragraphs, conclusion, that often provide valuable background, summarising, or concluding information.

This reading technique is a valuable resource for reviewing materials in academic studies to determine whether they really provide relevant information to our study purpose. (For some information on classroom approaches to teaching skimming see Appendix B)

1.5.3.2. Scanning

Similar to skimming in process but different in purpose, scanning is an efficient technique used to find a particular piece of information rather than general impression, without having the need to understand the rest of the text. This technique involves looking down and around a page quickly and efficiently searching for specific information we need. It is useful for finding a specific name, date, statistical number, fact, or detail without reading the whole text. And so, during scan reading we should use peripheral vision instead of focusing only on the logical sequence of the text.

From the methodological viewpoint of teaching scanning, Karl (1995:108) outlines five practical classroom approaches (see Appendix C), and he suggests that scan reading exercises should be time-competition-based, since it requires students' quick responses and thus trains them in reading quickly.

1.5.3.4. Extensive reading

Reading extensively means reading in quantity, principally in works of literature. In societies where extensive reading is encouraged, people tend to gain the culture of reading as much as they can for enjoyment or pleasure in their first or official language in which reading materials are accessible in large quantities with regular frequency. Some examples of these materials are novels, newspapers, and magazines.

According to Richards (1998:8), reading research reveals that many other terms like abundant reading, free reading, wide reading, and supplementary reading, have been used to refer to extensive reading, mainly in foreign language pedagogy, to mean reading rapidly in quantity for pleasure. Giving emphasis to this statement, Grabe (2009) seems to agree with Richards as he expresses his ideas as follows:

The ability to read texts for long periods of time is a hallmark of fluent reading. No other set of reading activities or reading practice can substitute for reading a longer text with reasonable comfort and without needing to stop constantly, and without feeling fatigued or overwhelmed. (Grabe, 2009:311)

In this kind of reading, the reader's attention is more centred on the content rather than the language of the text.

Extensive reading as Richards, Platt & Platt (1992:133) explain, was coined as a term to refer to a kind of reading expected to help foreign language learners to develop a liking for reading in the target language and consequently expand their language knowledge. Contrary to reading for academic purposes, it does not seem to meet

students' needs in content areas, since the intention is not primarily to expand the knowledge of the target language but the knowledge of a specific area. This being so, devoting careful attention to intensive reading would be more significant to the research carried out in our particular context.

1.5.3.3. Intensive reading

In academic contexts, reading intensively is the greatest requisite for success. The teaching of content areas makes reading a more flexible, interactive and reflective process that involves a bond between reading strategies and techniques, and the critical thinking skills for better exploration of contents to construct meaning.

Regarding the definition of intensive reading, Richards & Schmidt (2002:194) refer to it as a kind of reading done slowly and demanding a higher level of understanding information; González (2011:35) also says it is a language teaching strategy to make students develop their reading comprehension ability and the understanding of concepts.

Studying content areas in a foreign language creates a tendency for students to use the same language they find in textbooks or other reading materials to construct their meanings. That is to say, students are likely to consume ideas or concepts in a literal way, which implies the absence of critical reflection as a limitation grounded on the lack of language fluency. Furthermore, in the view of González (2011:48), he perceives this behaviour as an effect not only produced by the language level but also other factors like the lack of reading strategies and techniques, the mismatch between the learners' needs, the relevance and authenticity of the materials used, and the instructional design of the lessons.

Academic intensive reading implies recognizing, deciphering and constructing meaning from texts so as to make students be capable of giving descriptions, explanations and clear illustrations of concepts. On the other hand, particularly speaking about students aiming at developing reading abilities with content areas in a foreign language, like the Angolan second year ELT students, both the content and the language will contribute to develop their skills in the area of study as well as the language of instruction.

1.5.4. Reading fluency, reading rate, and comprehension

Reading is a very complex and challenging process, and even intimidating to many FL and L2 readers who see reading fluency as something that is still far from being achieved. But it is a pleasurable and rewarding process for L1 readers who confidently read any written materials at a good pace without any apparent effort.

Reading fluency is the main device for many successful readers in academic contexts. In addition, Grabe (2009:289) mentions that it is chiefly characterised by four features: automatic recognition of words, quick reading and good comprehension level, the reading rate varying between 250–300 words per minute, and reading in quantity for long periods of time in a relaxing environment. On the contrary to L1 readers, these characteristics are very rarely noticeable in FL and L2 readers who need to use the language as a tool for acquisition of knowledge and skills in academic settings.

Regarding the FL and L2 students in advanced levels of education, Grabe (2009:290) basing on reading research says that they can be successful in comprehension tests if enough time is given to cover all the questions. However, the lack of fluency in reading which results in low level of information processing is also evident.

If we carefully analyse the paragraphs above, we can see the FL and L2 readers are at a disadvantage, compared with the L1 readers, for they lack fluency though they might have some reasonable degree of comprehension which may probably be the result of their L1 background knowledge, experience, and L1 reading skills transference to the FL reading contexts. However, we think that one way to help these students reach a good level of reading fluency is to expose them to a large number of reading tasks, and familiarise them with a set of effective reading strategies and techniques, more especially, those involving critical thinking skills - the abilities to think logically in rational and flexible ways through reasoning or reflections - including critical reading skills which we will talk about in the next section.

1.5.5. Critical reading skills

Critical reading has an important role to play in reading for academic purposes as it involves understanding concepts or ideas from what we read. In accordance with this, Richards & Schmidt (2002:134) say that it encompasses reacting critically to the reading contents by means of connecting the information with our own background

knowledge, experience, values, attitudes and beliefs to check its consistency and relevance.

Using a body of critical reading strategies helps readers to get the most out of what they read i.e. comprehension becomes clearer and more solid. These strategies entail previewing, analysing, identifying, evaluating, summarising, making inference, drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes, generalising, and the SQ3R strategy which stands for *Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review* (see section 1.5.5.9 below) – all regarded as highly effective for active reading.

1.5.5.1. Previewing

The term previewing, from its word parts, clearly suggests seeing something in advance. That is, as Wiener & Bazerman (1994:78) say, a strategy used to look ahead to the information we read without covering it in detail, to have an idea of what the reading selection is about and see if it connects with our reading need and purpose. Still, they go on to say that the previewing strategy can be carried out in different ways. We can preview a reading selection from its component elements such as titles, subtitles, introduction, headings, subheadings, words in special print for example, italic, underlined, words in bold and so on, visuals, first and last paragraphs, conclusion, questions that come after the selection and the summary or conclusion. We can also preview long works, for example a text book. This is done by looking at the different parts such as title, table of contents, introduction or preface, conclusion, index, glossary, appendix and the bibliography.

Paying special attention to these elements before we actually start reading is a valuable strategy that makes reading more focused, which consequently results in more effective reading comprehension.

1.5.5.2. Analysing text structure

Academic texts reflect how writers shape their ideas depending on the subject and the intention of the writing i.e. the purpose that leads them to write for a specific audience or group of people.

Texts structure, generally recognized in the patterns of their paragraphs which are the basic units of thought in texts, Wiener & Bazerman (1994:168) point out that they are helpful hints to understand what the writer wishes to convey. Furthermore, they have identified five basic texts structure:

1. Ordering of ideas – this structure includes chronological order, place order, and the order of importance.
2. Listing of details – in this structure the text is based on details and facts that are not developed. For example, the paragraph above on elements to preview in reading selections and textbooks (see 1.5.5.1).
3. Classification – here the text information is organised into categories or classes of details from the reading topic, and it also presents similarities among details of the same category, and dissimilarities among those belonging to different categories.
4. Comparison and contrast – this structure shows how an object is similar to another and how they differ from one another.
5. Cause and effect – it looks at why something happens and its result or feedback.

One thing we should consider is that not all texts are one-structure-based. Writers may insert a structure inside the other, but generally, you can find out the main pattern that will guide you to understand the writer's intention with that particular piece of information.

1.5.5.3. Identifying main ideas and supporting details

Finding main ideas and details in academic texts is a crucial strategy to save time for critical thinking and the best way to internalise the contents.

As paragraphs contain units of thought related to a topic, each sentence provides an idea which is necessary to build up the main idea in the paragraph and consequently in the text. Putting emphasis on this assertion, Wiener and Bazerman (1994:124) explain that the main idea in a text may be explicitly presented in the topic sentence which is usually found at the beginning and occasionally at the end of the paragraph, or simply implied in details and other hints. Once the reader discovers the main idea in a text, it is important to add details that sustain it so that additional information about the topic is provided.

Some important techniques that readers need to be aware of in identifying the main idea are: look at the two first and the two last sentences if the text is a single paragraph, and look at the first and the last paragraph if the text includes many paragraphs. This is a good technique as it is economically time efficient and strategically effective for the identification of main ideas in texts.

We believe that if students apply these strategies properly, they can benefit a lot from the readings they do, and therefore academic success is more likely to be achieved.

1.5.5.4. Evaluating ideas

(...) effective reading is more than just understanding. You must be able to read in a critical way – which means that you have to evaluate ideas once you understand them. When you evaluate ideas, you judge the worth of what you read. (Wiener & Bazerman, 1994:269)

Most of the time, academic reading selections present ideas or concepts in the form of statements based on facts and/or opinions about the subject of the discussion.

In order to understand what evaluating ideas means as it involves critical thinking, according to the quotation above, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between fact and opinion. For Littell (n.d) “a fact is a statement that can be true by observation or by experiment”. Let us take the following example: ‘the SQ3R reading strategy was coined by Francis Pleasant Robinson in 1946’ - this statement is a fact. It is something we know and does not need discussion; we can confirm it by checking the records. According to the Learning Express Editors (2011), “opinions are things *believed* to have happened, things *believed* to be true, things *believed* to exist”. One example for this is the following sentence: ‘critical thinking should be one of the subjects for ELT students in Angola’ - this sentence is an opinion. It refers to what we think or believe, and most of the time without evidence. Though it is sometimes difficult to distinguish fact from opinion, what the reader needs to remember, as Littell (n.d) suggests, is to see whether there are or not evidences to prove the statement. Furthermore, Wiener & Bazerman (1994:269) point to some techniques to keep facts separate from opinions:

1. While reading, locate expressions that hint at statements of opinion. Some of these expressions are frequency adverbs and probability words like *sometimes*, *perhaps*, most of the time used to limit an idea stating a fact to leave room for opinions. Examples of other words are: *I think*, *I feel*, *I suggest*, *I believe*, and so on.
2. Check if the author is or is not credible before accepting an idea as a fact or agreeing with another as an opinion.
3. From the author’s opinion, try to infer if it is possible to have a contradictory opinion.
4. For statements of fact make sure there is enough evidence that supports it.

These techniques can be very helpful for students to identify a fact statement or an opinion one, but the student’s frame of reference is also likely to influence the decision on whether a given statement is a fact, opinion or both.

1.5.5.5. Summarizing

Very frequently students are requested to rewrite an extended piece of information into a condensed form as part of their assignments. This creates, among many students, the terror of failing to accomplish their tasks since summarizing involves writing, and so students' writing difficulties might also limit their abilities to summarise what they have read and understood.

Summarizing as defined by Wormeli (2005:2) is regarded as a complex and interactive process which involves students in putting statements they read in few words, without losing sight of the original essence of the text. Another definition by Friend (2000) refers to it as an efficient study technique which enables students to draw associations of text information into their existing knowledge as a result of their early instruction or experience, with the potential to improve their cognition.

Summary writing helps students to understand the major direction or the main points, and the structural organization of any written information. It implies identifying main ideas in the text and determining how the remaining information connects to those ideas through questioning-answering strategies. Smith & Zygouris-Coe (2006:1) and Bazerman (2010:50) point to three techniques that can be used to effectively summarise written texts: selection and deletion, note taking, and miniaturizing. The first technique refers to locating relevant and main ideas to summarize the text, ignoring those details that do not have strong impact on what the text conveys. The second deals with jotting down important ideas and organizing them in a logical sequence to see how they fit together, and last technique consists of reducing, concisely and coherently, the size of the information, avoiding distortion of the original text meaning.

Since summarising reflects a critical reading skill, combining the summarizing techniques, by all accounts efficient, with questioning and answering strategies may result in high levels of comprehension from which students will benefit throughout their academic lives.

1.5.5.6. Making and supporting inferences

As reading is a psychological game, as we saw in its definition, writers do not always make everything explicit for the reader. Some gaps in the information are left in order to engage the reader in guessing the embedded meaning from the clues provided by the details of the text, the psychological processes, and the reader's own experience

and the cultural context. This process requires readers to make and support inferences they draw from texts.

Trying to understand the process of inference, many authors have presented their definitions, and among them we mention Wiener & Bazerman (1994:221) who say that inference refers to a process consisting of going beyond the literal information we read by examining the clues and our own background knowledge to make an accurate guess of meaning. Glancoe (2002:R91) defines it as a process based on reasoning and personal experience which brings about an idea of the covert information in a text. Moreover, Zwiers (2010:99) states it as a combination of the text information with the reader's own background knowledge to construct meaning that is not explicitly accessible in the text.

If we pay attention to the preceding paragraph, we can see that most of the authors include the word 'text' in their definitions, but it is true that inferences are not solely made from written materials. We can also infer from people's behaviour and the circumstantial events that we are subjected to. An example of this can be when a teacher in an examination preparation session explains something over and over again. What students are more likely to infer from that behaviour is: that particular content, being repeatedly explained, is a part of the material that will be assessed. However, in this section, we address written materials only for the reason that they are the main concern of our research. So, from this view, Zwiers (2010:100) identifies two kinds of inferences: text-to-text inferences, and text-to-self and world inferences. The first kind refers to the links between parts of a text, that is, how those parts relate to one another. For example, in a cause-effect text, students need to infer the relation between different parts of the text from the in-text clues and the structural organisation of the information. The second type is about the link we draw between what we read and our prior knowledge or experience. For example, if students read a section on the topic 'Differences between L1 and L2', they are very likely to make an analogy between the information under the topic with their own learning experience of both languages.

The ability to draw inferences from whatever students read can be encouraged by teaching them to accurately and automatically make connections between what they read and their background knowledge from the existing supporting clues. This can be done through creating environments in which students are intensively involved in making many and varied inferences to empower creative critical thinking skills and

expanded learning. For this purpose, we believe that the materials we will design for the students we refer to in our research can be a good start to set up such environments in their classrooms.

1.5.5.7. Drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes

Good readers interpret what they read. Generally, they find ways to understand and provide explanation of ideas they are able to generate from reading. The capacity of producing new ideas but related to the contents one reads can be developed by means of drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes of the reading.

Drawing conclusion is another critical reading skill very similar to making inference (see the preceding section). Both require to fill in the gaps left by the writer, perhaps because they feel the omitted information is less important, or they expect the reader to know it already, or even they want the reader to find it by filling in such a gap while reading. And predicting outcomes deals with approaching accurate guesses about the next coming information while and after reading (Glancoe, 2002:R83). That is to say, the reading you do offers you enough hints to see in advance where a given piece of information leads to. An illustration of this is in the following example in which a student is requested to complete the sentence 'If you keep reading academic materials without appropriate strategies, ' with one of the following options:

- a) You will not learn the language.
- b) You may need extra materials.
- c) You will not be academically successful.
- d) You should give up academic life.

An alert reader will obviously choose option c) to complete the sentence. To choose the right option, the reader starts by associating his experience as a student, and the logical sequence of the sentence with the clues provided.

In short, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, and making inferences, are interwoven. That is, they are closely related skills aiming to accurately provide guesses for the left out information in a reading portion. (For some techniques on how to draw conclusions and predict outcomes, see Appendix D)

1.5.5.8. Making generalisations

Another important tool that helps academic readers interpret information is to make generalizations.

Wiener & Bazerman (1994:258) assert that generalisations are extensive statements that apart from having characteristics of a conclusion apply to a range of examples. For instance, 'all English words that end in *-al* are adjectives, ' this is a generalisation. To support this statement we can illustrate the example with words like **critical**, and **structural**.

Attentive readers are able to recognise and evaluate generalisations made by a writer. While reading, according to Ludlam (n.d: slide 4), readers make and sustain their own generalisations basing them on the facts and details in the text.

Apart from using the clue words in generalised statements such as *many*, *all*, *most*, *generally*, *none*, *always*, *in general*, *overall*, some techniques for making generalisations are presented in Appendix E.

Summing up, generalisations, like inferences and predictions, require readers to associate their background knowledge with the information in the text. Moreover, being aware of clues and techniques to generalise can effectively contribute to deeper exploration of what people read especially in academic situations.

1.5.5.9. The SQ3R strategy

Concerns on how to overcome reading problems in academic environments have triggered a variety of reading strategies, based on research in cognitive psychology, that are widely used by competent readers to exploit the reading materials as much as they can. Helmut (2012) points out the SQ3R or SQRRR as one of these strategies, which stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. It was coined by Robinson in 1946, and specially created for university students who generally deal with complex reading matters in their studies, and therefore demand for reading efficiency and high level of comprehension from what they read is predictable.

Richards & Schmidt (2002:506) define the SQ3R as a reading comprehension strategy advisable, essentially, to readers in academic contexts, and designed to help them improve their understanding, memory, and efficiency in the reading process. They affirm that reading in the SQ3R style entails a five-step process:

1. **Survey** - at this stage the reader uses the preview techniques, that is, they look at the titles, subtitles, introduction, headings, subheadings, words in special print, visuals, first and last paragraphs, conclusion, and questions, if there are any, just to have a picture of the selection.

2. **Question** – here the reader raises questions i.e. the text features previewed in the first step are turned into questions with expectations to find the answers during the reading step, which is the next one.
3. **Read** – it is at this stage where the actual reading takes place, to provide answers to the questions made in the preceding stage.
4. **Recite** – the reader closes or covers the reading material, recalls and verbalises, in their own words, the main points of the selection, key concepts, and summarises the purpose for reading that particular text. This can be done by saying things out loud to themselves, or by writing those ideas on a paper.
5. **Review** – the reader goes over the material to check if something has been missed out in the previous steps, or there are still comprehension gaps of concepts, key words, and so on. It is a way of relearning things and keeping them in memory.

This is an effective and interesting reading strategy, if well applied, and in my opinion its use should not only be encouraged at university level but also at other levels of formal education, since it provides guidance on how to get the most from a textbook or any other academic reading material.

1.5.6. Becoming a strategic reader

The strategic reader is one who automatically and routinely applies combinations of effective and appropriate strategies depending on reader goals, reading tasks, and strategic processing abilities. The strategic reader is also aware of his or her comprehension effectiveness in relation to reading goals and applies sets of strategies appropriately to enhance comprehension of difficult texts. (Grabe, 2009:220)

Instructional contexts require students to deeply explore their reading contents through an array of tasks that very often call for the eclectic use of strategies and techniques to fulfil their academic obligations to reach their goals.

Considering the introductory quotation of this section, it is clear that what defines a strategic reader is the eclectic use of reading strategies and techniques, routine, and automaticity in interacting with reading materials. However, Grabe (2009:220) claims that “before exploring the advances made toward developing strategic readers, it is necessary to address three major issues surrounding strategy instruction in reading: (a) the relationship between skills and strategies; (b) the relationship between metacognition and strategies; and (c) the role of metalinguistic awareness in comprehension.”.

Concerning the skills and strategies, the distinction of these terminologies is, sometimes, confusing and difficult to draw. But Alexander & Jetton (2000:295-6) claim

that the distinction is based on whether the way each of those functions is automatic (unconscious) or if it involves well-known steps to follow (conscious). Furthermore, Grabe (2009:221) introduces an assertion which agrees with the preceding claim, and we quote: “*strategies are cognitive processes that are open to conscious reflection but that may be on their way to becoming skills* [author’s italics].” This assertion leads us to understand that strategies are conscious observable procedures of doing something, whereas skills reflect the advanced stage of the automaticity of strategies, i.e. when strategies become automatic they turn into skills. One example to illustrate this is the identification of a key idea in a sentence. What students generally do at the beginning is to ask two basic questions: 1- *What is the sentence about?* (We know that a sentence has a subject), 2- *What does/did the subject of the sentence do? Or what happens/happened to the subject?* – This is the strategy. But as time goes on with a lot of practice, they will not need to ask these questions intentionally to identify the key idea. It will happen automatically, which is typical of skills.

The issue of metacognition and strategies emphasises the knowledge and control we have on our cognition. Baker (2002, 2008) and Pressley (2002b) say that this is summarised in metacognitive awareness (knowledge) and metacognitive regulation (the application of knowledge), similar to strategies that must be known and the circumstances in which they can be applied, in reading for example, to help comprehension.

Regarding metalinguistic awareness and strategic reading relationship, Nagy (2007) cited in Grabe (2009:225) state that it is supported by the Metalinguistic Awareness Hypothesis (MAH) which advocates the knowledge of linguistic aspects, such as syntactic, morphological, phonological, orthographic, word-level, semantic, discourse, pragmatic, and other language-related features, that can be reached through reflection and analysis of the language. This knowledge is regarded as highly beneficial to strategic reading since it makes reading comprehension facilitated and effective.

Summarising, to be a strategic reader implies having a body of strategies to apply appropriately in different reading situations, and in a routinized fashion to build automaticity of such strategies.

1.6. Methodological approaches to teaching reading skills

Considering different approaches applicable to language teaching, given its specificity the instruction of reading skills for academic purposes can be based on Communicative Language Teaching methodologies, essentially on the Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach, as our main aim with this research is to help Angolan ELT students with effective techniques and strategies to read their course contents well i.e. helping students to acquire reading skills through the practice of reading strategies in materials related to Linguistics and ELT methodology.

According to Richards & Rogers (2001:172), the TBLT approach is a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners can benefit from lessons, the kinds of classroom activities that best smooth the progress of learning, and the responsibility of teachers and learners in the classroom. The task-based approach to learning introduces the idea of learning by doing. This idea is persistent to communicative language teaching methodologies, and thus it can effectively fit the requisite to develop reading skills of foreign language readers in academic contexts.

1.6.1. Selecting reading materials

The selection of reading materials for students in particular contexts is the most challenging job for teachers and it falls into the category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is divided into two: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Our research is based on the first of these.

Selecting reading materials for academic purposes is a process that needs consideration of factors that can, in a positive or negative way, influence the reading process in a foreign or second language. As teachers are active promoters of students' learning, Arias (2007:131) concludes that they are expected to provide reading materials suitable to their students' level, interests, needs and background knowledge. And so, being aware of these factors will greatly help teachers to adjust reading strategies and techniques to students accordingly, in motivational and supportive ways, in order to enhance their reading aptitude and help them be able to read fluently the different contents of their area of study. Nuttall (1996) cited in Haicha-Abdat (2013:8) mentions three basic criteria that should be considered in selecting reading materials: suitability, readability, and exploitability. These criteria implicitly evoke that reading materials must be suitable to the context in which they are used i.e. they have to motivate students

and meet their learning needs. These criteria also propose that classroom reading materials should be readable. That is to say, the content and language used in those materials should not underestimate or challenge the students' linguistic and cognitive capacities. They must be exploitable; this means that the information in those materials has to provide developmental and linguistic benefits to students. That is, students are expected to learn new knowledge be it at the level of content or the language itself, apart from the acquisition of skills to enable successful reading.

Despite the impact of the factors mentioned above on the teaching of reading skills to ELT students in Angola, if teachers make thoughtful reflections on the choice of academic reading materials in combination with appropriate and effective techniques and strategies as we expect to do in Chapter 3, though unquestionably demanding in terms of expertise and time, the results of these efforts can be significantly rewarding for both the students and teachers once their goals are achieved.

1.6.2. Stages of a reading lesson

Regarding the stages of a reading lesson, Saricoban (2002:3) notes that they are based on the three-phase approach to reading tasks: pre-reading, while reading and post-reading. The kind of reading that occurs in classrooms is normally guided by the teacher to help students with a range of strategies and techniques focusing on reading competence and independence. Often though reading is used not to improve reading itself but to consolidate grammar or to teach new vocabulary, or dictionary skills or culture and so on (Boutefeu, slide 10:2012). This is really true, especially in our context, for the fact that reading and vocabulary are greatly interwoven, and vocabulary in turn involves the skills of searching words in dictionaries, knowing the parts of speech of such words and their meanings which are sometimes defined according to the culture.

The pre-reading stage denotes the start of a reading lesson where, according to Crill (2002), the teacher explores students' experiences and background knowledge in relation to reading materials at hand, and prompts students to how they are expected to work with the materials so that its benefits are within reach. This stage, by and large, involves reading strategies like previewing, analysis of text structure, and prediction of contents.

The while reading stage engages students in incorporating their background knowledge and experience into the information in reading materials. In view of Saricoban (2002:4) at this stage students begin to confirm the predictions made in the earlier stage through trying to organise information in the material around their own knowledge, making inferences, and moving on to generalisations that result from the connection between new information and what they already know about the subject.

As a matter of fact, these are not the only tasks that may take place at this stage. The teacher might want them to do other tasks like annotating the text by margin notes, picking up the central ideas from each paragraph, questioning and hypothesising on the reading passage and so on; all this depends on the task set and what the teacher's aim is for them to do or focus on.

The post-reading stage covers the moment of the lesson where the students are invited to recall what they have read and apply critical thinking skills to their understanding. It entails evaluating ideas, identifying the main ideas and details of the reading material, summarising, drawing conclusions, and so on. In like manner of the while reading stage, this one also depends on the tasks assigned by the teacher. He may for example want them to answer questions from the reading selection, rewording or paraphrasing parts of the selection, or he may even ask them to draw concept maps to help them understand the information visually.

Putting all this information together, using guided reading for FL readers like those of the Angolan ELT course can be a good starting point which gives them many opportunities to deal with reading situations involving the strategies they learn, and encouragement for interaction with more academic reading materials, so as to provide more chances for practising reading strategies up to the point when these strategies become automatic and signal their reading fluency.

1.6.3. Teacher's role in a reading classroom

It is less probable that students do reading tasks on their own without the teacher's supervision in foreign language classrooms so, as Harmer (2007:284) asserts, reading teachers have a significant role to play in classrooms; they need to encourage their students to read as much as possible to improve their reading abilities, and also drive them to be aware of the usefulness and importance of being skilled at reading skills in modern societies, especially for studies.

Ding (2012) identifies five roles of a teacher in reading classrooms, which serve the purpose of helping students with strategies and skills that will make them fluent and independent readers. Moreover, Ding (2012) and Harmer (2007:286) find these roles strictly related to the management and organisation of reading classrooms, the design of materials and activities to practise reading strategies, classroom assistance, action research, and the promotion of reading attitudes. The outline and discussion of these five roles are presented below.

Teacher as a manager and organiser - in this role as Ding (2012) says, the teacher is supposed to provide clear instructions and necessary time for different activities during the lesson, to select relevant contents for students based on the goals to be achieved, and to make efforts to facilitate students' learning in an environment that favours their success.

Teacher as a designer – For Ding (2012) in this role the teacher is expected to shape materials that match the students' interests and needs; and the strategies and techniques that effectively work for the acquisition of reading skills. So, it is important that the teacher designs activities that promote good interaction in the classroom as well as encouraging motivation for reading.

Teacher as a source - Similar to the preceding role but with a small difference since this one focuses on adapting materials to support students' learning as perceived by Ding (2012), the teacher should bring to the class reading materials that are neither below nor above the students' level. Here, the teacher needs to be creative in order to elicit students' background knowledge on topics in the materials. The teacher can for example ask students questions about the materials, and invite them to share their knowledge or experiences on the topic. All what they do in the classroom has to relate to the materials they cover as consolidation while preparing the ground for new information.

Teacher as an investigator or a counsellor - During the class time, besides giving instructions and providing support for students' learning, Ding (2012) suggests that the teacher should also observe how the classroom elements interact, that is, the activities carried out in the classroom, the students' behaviour towards reading materials and activities, and the factors that are likely to impede students' learning.

Assessing all these elements and thinking critically on how they may impact upon students' learning can be determinant to improve the teaching in favour of students' better learning. A practical example of this role in our context is how we realised that second year ELT students at ISCED-Benguela had reading difficulties. As a result of this problem, the current research paper will greatly contribute to the teaching and learning of reading skills in that institution.

Teacher as a prompter or tutor - In this role, according to Harmer (2007:286), the teacher's main concern is to turn the theory into practice and dependent reading into independent reading. The teacher seeks to influence their students to make use of reading skills, especially critical skills, and apply reading strategies acquired during the class time in a more creative way so that their curiosity, interest and motivation can lead them to continuous reading practice and research on how they can achieve fluency. One example for this role can be suggesting the SQ3R strategy to students when reading for their assignments.

Succinctly, the role of the teacher in FL/L reading classrooms is to ensure that the teaching and learning process of reading skills occurs in an environment that creates a significant interaction between the teacher and students connected by the reading materials and strategies, so as to encourage a reading culture which can be a fundamental element for their academic success.

1.6.4. Assessment in reading

Reading teachers, apart from sharing reading information and strategies with their students, also invest time and hard work in assessing the students' reading abilities so as to test the theoretical information that sustains the reading process, in order to evaluate the impact of their teaching practice on the students' learning. Despite the pertinence this topic has in ELT contexts, we are not going to deeply focus on it as this is a very important and huge area in language teaching, which deserves more careful discussions supported by contextual explanations.

Regarding the definition of assessment, Richards & Schmidt (2002:35) view it as a systematic process of gathering data on the students' abilities and the teaching process itself from which the learning and teaching success is inferred. It plays a substantial role as it signals how students progress, and offers chances to make repairs of potential impediments in teaching and learning reading skills. Grabe (2009:353-6)

mentions five basic purposes of reading assessment: reading proficiency, classroom learning, assisted learning, curricular effectiveness, and for research purposes. On the other hand, Valencia (2002:2) reports that the purposes of reading assessment lead to categorization of assessments in three main types: standard assessment, classroom-based assessment, and student-self assessment, each with its typical characteristics.

Standard assessment - This kind of assessment covers the one that takes place for all students of a country, region or school, in order to make comparison of their performance in relation to other students at the same grade or level. One example of this is the Katyavala Bwila University (Benguela) entrance examination for the ELT course. It seems to be more advantageous for education authorities in different regions as it helps them to collect reliable data on the students' strengths and weaknesses, from which they make decisions.

Classroom-based assessment - The actual assessment done in the classroom under the teacher's guidance. In this type of assessment, the teacher is the maximum authority to decide on how and what to assess. He/she also makes judgements from the results and provides feedback as a chance to make repairs, and to ensure that they are on the right track. Graue (1993) and Wolf (1989) emphasise this type of assessment as more efficient and effective, since its results can be very gratifying. One example of efficiency and effectiveness of classroom-based assessment in my context is the feedback that teachers generally provide after a reading task.

Student self-assessment - This assessment is carried out by the students on their own. Students are given responsibilities to judge their learning and use of knowledge, and identify their own strengths and weaknesses. They are expected to become autonomous learners i.e. owners of their learning but with the teacher's support where help is needed. This type of assessment can be good for students who easily can recognise their capabilities and limitations, and bad for those who can do well only if guided. In short, we think these differences are more explainable in light of learning styles that vary from one student to another.

From the characteristics of the assessment types presented above, strengths and some weaknesses are made evident depending on their purpose, and their applicability success is determined by the circumstance in which the assessment is carried out. Not disregarding standard and student self-assessment, classroom-based assessment can be

more appropriate and effective in the context of the Angolan ELT students because of its great concern not only for the teaching and learning process, the assessments and its results, but also for the immediate and on-going contributions of these results at the classroom level. However, student self-assessment can play an important role in supporting the classroom-based assessment to portray a more complete picture of how the teaching and learning process occurs in classrooms and how it can lead to a change in reading development.

With the discussion on the assessment process in teaching and learning reading skills, we have come to the end of the first chapter which focused on the theoretical part of the research about the reading difficulties Angolan ELT students at ISCED-Benguela have in dealing with their academic reading materials. The hypotheses stemmed from two basic questions on why most Angolan ELT students at ISCED-Benguela could not understand or interpret their reading materials well enough to avoid poor results in the main course subjects taught in English, and what could be done to help these students to read efficiently and achieve better results. The answer to these questions indicated the need to provide some techniques and strategies for students, to help them improve their reading abilities in the academic context. Thus, the theoretical foundations to support those techniques and strategies consisted of six main sections entailing the definition of reading, the description of the nature of reading, the examination of three main theories of reading, the differences and similarities between reading in the first language and reading in the second or foreign language, the purposes of academic reading, and considerations on some methodological approaches applicable to teaching and assessing reading skills.

All in all, the discussions in Chapter I made us believe that improving students' reading abilities especially for academic purposes is a process that requires more than just making students read materials and do the tasks assigned in the classroom. Thus, having given attention to theoretical issues on reading development, we think the ground has been prepared to move on to Chapter 2 which covers the research methodology of this paper.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous Chapter looked at the literature review on academic reading, and the present Chapter focuses on the research undertaken. It consists of four sections: the first section looks the participants, the second presents an overview of the study, the third refers to the methods used, the fourth deals with the presentation of the outcomes, and the analysis and discussion of findings.

2.1. Participants

The research on this topic is centred on the Angolan second year students of the English Language Teaching (ELT) course at Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação (ISCED) in Benguela, and it focuses on academic reading difficulties these students have in dealing with their course subjects.

The students we refer to are being trained to be teachers of English in secondary schools. There are 21 male and 5 female students, their age varies from 20 to 35 years old on average, with mixed language abilities ranging from Intermediate to Upper Intermediate levels equivalent to B1 and B2 (CEFR levels). These levels in our contexts are determined by the University entrance examination in ELT as the test is designed for candidates who have done those levels. On the other hand, seventeen students out of the twenty-six mentioned have Portuguese as their first language, while eight have Umbundu as their first language with Portuguese as the second language, and one has Kikongo as the first language with Portuguese as the second language. According to the ELT course curriculum, these students have five courses in the second year whose contents are fully taught in English, and this fact leads them to interact with reading materials in English as it is the language of instruction.

Regarding the statistics, twenty-eight students from the classes of both shifts (afternoon and evening) were given a research questionnaire which aimed at gathering information on the students' reading habits and their academic reading techniques and strategies. The questionnaire was given to all the students despite the fact that the majority of the students in the second year are not attending the Reading Skills course this year as they did not pass Research Methodology 1 (a course taught in year one which is a pre-requisite for Reading Skills in year two). However, we planned to select randomly a representative sample from that group of students since all of them experience more or less the same reading difficulties in their academic lives.

2.2. Overview of the study

In the research planning stage, we first of all established the objectives of the research from the problem we highlighted in the introduction, and this led to the design of a questionnaire for students which aimed to provide valuable information regarding their reading habits in general, and the techniques and strategies they use in reading academic materials. We also conducted an unstructured interview with three second year ELT course teachers to help us understand more fully the problems these students face by means of comparing information provided by the students via the questionnaire with the information gathered from their teachers. In addition to these methods, we also carried out an evaluation of the current second year course book of Reading Skills used with those students as part of the study.

2.3. Methods

The collection of data was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

2.3.1. Students questionnaire

a) Design

The questionnaire (see Appendix F) had an introductory paragraph explaining the objective of the research, and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Besides the section in the questionnaire which includes background questions on the students' *gender, age, country of origin, first language*, and the *length of time* they have been interacting with reading materials in English, the questionnaire comprises fourteen questions divided into seven categories: the first category comprises two filter questions (1 and 9) which seek information on whether the students enjoy reading and if they transfer their reading strategies in the first language to English as a foreign language, each followed by two contingency questions which represent category two (questions *a* and *b* from 1, and *a* and *b* from 9). Category three has to do with two semantic differential questions (2 and 10) about the extent to which the students enjoy reading, and the attitude towards their course reading materials. The inventory questions 3 and 11 make up the fourth category dealing with the kind of materials students like reading the most, and the difficulties they face while reading academic materials. Category five entails six multiple choice questions (4, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13) seeking information on the frequency and the amount of time students read for their own interest, and on the

academic subjects; this category also looks at the approaches students use to deal with unknown words in reading texts, and the kinds of texts they feel more motivated about to read. Finally, the two last categories encompass a ranking question (8) which deals with motives that make students read, and a Likert scale question (14) on the frequency with which they use some strategies, mentioned in the question, while reading academic materials. As we have said above, the questionnaire consists of fourteen questions described as follows: two filter questions, two semantic differential questions, two inventory questions, six multiple choice questions, a ranking question, and a Likert scale question.

b) Procedures

After initial drafting and discussion, the questionnaire was revised and improved, and ended up with fourteen questions. It was administered to twenty-eight students to collect data on their reading habits, and the techniques and strategies they generally apply to reading academic materials. In this questionnaire survey, students were required to give their views on academic reading based on their experience as students. So, they took the questionnaires home to answer them and handed them back the following day. However, while receiving the papers back we realised that two of them have not been returned, therefore only twenty-six were received back. Thus, in section 2.4 below we will reflect on the responses from those students and the results obtained will be presented, analysed and discussed, taking into consideration the focus of our research.

2.3.2. Unstructured teacher interview

Having conducted a questionnaire to second year ELT students at ISCED Benguela, we considered the possibility and relevance of carrying out an informal interview with some of their teachers to have a general picture on what their views are concerning the reading problems those students have in different subjects of the course.

The interview was carried out with three teachers and it focused on five main questions (see interview guide questions in Appendix G). The interview was done to compare or relate the teachers' answers and views on the problem with the result of the students questionnaire in order to deduce and identify the central problem, and to test our research hypotheses.

a) Design

As we said in the introductory part to this section, the design of the unstructured interview entailed five basic questions. The first question was intended to confirm if the students really had reading problems, the second was proposed to have an idea of how students were doing in those teachers' subjects, the third was based on how the teachers generally carried out their lessons, the fourth question sought to gather information on how the teachers coped with the reading problems, and the last question referred to what they thought was the source or origin of such problems.

b) Participants

The three teachers were trained in ELT at the same institution they are working for. One teacher has been teaching Psycholinguistics for four years, the second has been teaching Methodology 1 for two years, and the third one has been teaching Reading Skills for four years. All of these three subjects are taught in the second year, and they precede other three subjects: Applied Linguistics, Methodology 2, and Composing Skills in the third year.

c) Procedures

Given that the interview was unstructured, it was conducted without prior warning with each of the three teachers during the class intervals in the staff room at ISCED and on different occasions. Being aware of the problems students have, we conducted the interview without explicitly explaining the objective as part of a friendly conversation in order to gather more information from their perspective about how they see such problems. Otherwise, we think it would not have been good to let them know we were going to interview them about students' problems we are aware of. They would probably have been less engaged and more careful with what they said about the problems, and as a consequence less data would be collected. Telling them later that the information they provided during the conversation was part of a study was considered the best way to do it. So, we started each interview in a conversational fashion for 10 to 15 minutes, without letting the participant know our real intentions with the questions we introduced from time to time while talking, but showing our concern for the problem and trying to suggest possible ways to overcome it. Furthermore, it was done in a way that could allow more flexibility in answering the questions, and allowed for the conversation to take unpredictable directions since the information provided was closely

related to the questions raised. The aim here was to create a good interview environment with the interviewee so that more information on the phenomenon under study could be collected in a relaxed manner with minimal intervention of the guide questions (Appendix G). As a result, the notes gathered in each interview were only jotted down after the conversation was over, and in the absence of the interviewee for the reasons explained above.

2.3.3. Evaluation of the current “Reading Skills” course

It is commonly believed that textbooks and course books for specific content areas play a crucial role in FL classrooms. And the quotation below makes it much clearer by stressing the relevance of selecting materials for teaching.

The selection of a course book is one of the most important decisions a teacher will make in shaping the content and nature of teaching and learning. It involves matching the material against the context in which it is going to be used, following the aims of the teaching program, as well as fitting the personal methodology of the teacher. (White, 2014:2)

Reflecting on the quotation above, it is a wise and vital decision to carry out evaluation of textbooks and course books used in specific contexts of teaching in order to balance how much we should rely on them, and by so doing we contribute positively to the teaching and learning process.

Here we will evaluate the textbook entitled *Reading Skills Handbook* (Wiener & Bazerman 1994) adopted for the subject of “Reading Skills” in the second year of ELT at ISCED Benguela. It consists of four units outlined as follow: 1- Getting started, 2- Comprehension, 3- Interpretation, and 4- The basic study skills.

Though this textbook is aimed at adult learners in academic contexts and presents, in each unit, materials extracted from the humanities, it does not include materials related to linguistics and ELT, which is the area of study for the students we refer to.

Very often, as Lawrence (2011:1) has said, many FL course books are merely designed to reflect the route map of a particular subject i.e. a format on which adaptations may take place, and this can be the major source of mismatches between the intended and the specific context. For this very reason, in this work we believe that if we evaluate the *Reading Skills Handbook* using the criteria we find relevant to our context, it will be much more helpful and enable us to reshape the materials, strategies, and the way we teach so that our aims and the students’ needs are met. Thus, the

following are ten criteria we will need to consider during the evaluation of the current course book:

1. **Course book aims** – are they relevant to the students' needs?
2. **Students' needs and interests** – does the course cater for these?
3. **Course level** – is it at the appropriate level?
4. **Course length** – is it enough to make students develop their reading skills?
5. **Reading exposure** – how much does it expose students to academic reading?
6. **Text genres** - what rhetorical structures do the texts present?
7. **Language level** – does the language underestimate or challenge students' abilities? Does it cater for a range of ability?
8. **Tasks organization** – does the structure of the tasks simplify students' learning of reading strategies in a logical sequence?
9. **Strategies and techniques for academic reading** – does it have enough appropriate strategies for reading academically?
10. **Authenticity** – are the reading materials based on linguistics and ELT?

Until now, this section has principally highlighted the significance of evaluating textbooks and materials for teaching in specific contexts, and the criteria we will use in the evaluation of the *Reading Skills Handbook*. The next section will present the outcomes of the research tools which include the outcomes of the course book evaluation.

2.4. Presentation of the outcomes and discussion

The present section is devoted to displaying the results gathered from the instruments used: the students questionnaire, unstructured teacher interview, and the course book evaluation. Here, we will present important statistical data along with questions they answer. Each section will be followed by a brief analysis and discussion of the findings.

2.4.1. Results and discussion of the students questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire administered to 26 ELT students in the second year at ISCED-Benguela consists of a word chart with background issues on the students' *gender, age, country of origin, first language*, and the *length of time* they have been interacting with reading materials in English. The results shown in the figure below reveal that 21 respondents of the subjects surveyed are male students, and the other 5 respondents are female students.

1. Gender

GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	21	80.76
Female	5	19.23

Figure 1: Students' gender

The huge difference between the genders is explained considering that in our context there are very few females interested in learning English. They see it as a difficult foreign language to learn, and even those who are successful tend not to join the ELT course at ISCED because of finding it much more difficult as it involves dealing with scientific matters in English. Nevertheless, we think this is only a prejudice they have about learning English as a foreign language. Language learning occurs in male and female people's minds in the same way. So, what should be done to control this situation is to encourage them to develop a liking for English especially from grade 7 which is the first year of English in state schools.

Having looked at the students' gender, the following figure displays the second year ELT students in different age groups.

2. Age

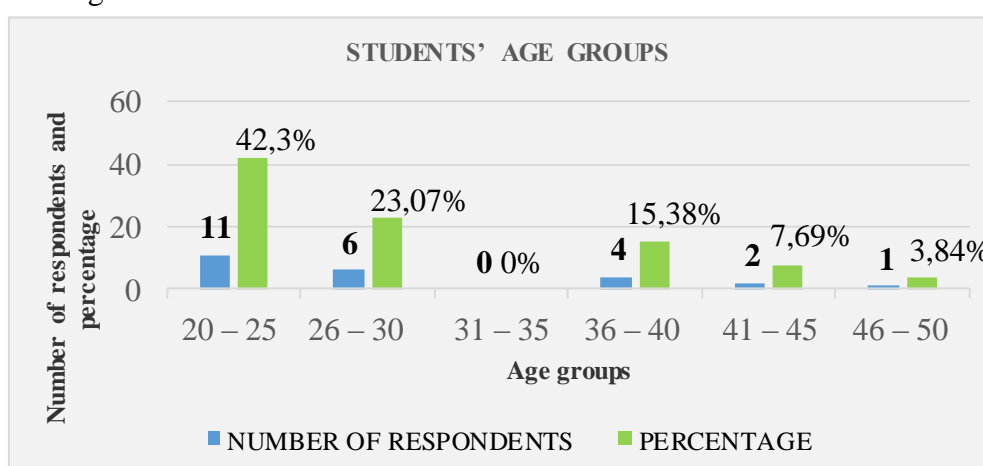


Figure 2: Students' age groups

The figure above shows that nearly half of the respondents (11 respondents) are aged between 20 and 25, nearly a quarter (6) are aged between 26 and 30, 4 respondents are aged between 36 and 40, 2 respondents are between 41 and 45, and 1 respondent is aged between 46 and 50.

The enormous discrepancy of students under 35 years of age, and those aged over 35 is due to the fact that the latter group rarely join ELT and the potential reasons for this may be similar to those of the females we referred to. This leads us to conclude

that in our context young males are generally more interested in learning foreign languages, especially English, as it is a global language and useful for technology

3. Country of origin

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Angola	21	80.76
Namibia	0	0
Zambia	0	0
other	0	0

Figure 3: Students' countries of origin

Regarding the country of origin, the figure above indicates that we managed to get 21 respondents from Angola.

Concerning the 80.76% of the respondents who mentioned Angola show the majority though five of the students did not answer this question probably due to carelessness. Thus, the fact that most of them are Angolan indicates that they have learnt and are still learning English as a foreign language. And this is likely to be the main reason why they complain about difficult words in their course reading materials, though at an advanced level (see sections 1.3 and 1.4). On the other hand, relating it to issue 4 (see next figure), it accounts for why most students have Portuguese as their first language though only some of them have Umbundu and Kikongo (local languages) as their first ones. Umbundu and Kikongo are unlikely to interfere in students' reading comprehension in English since these students do not read in the local languages (see section 2.4.1 question 9b). But Portuguese has a strong interference due to its status as first language for many students especially the young ones, and as the second for some students, but it is the official language for all of them.

4. First language

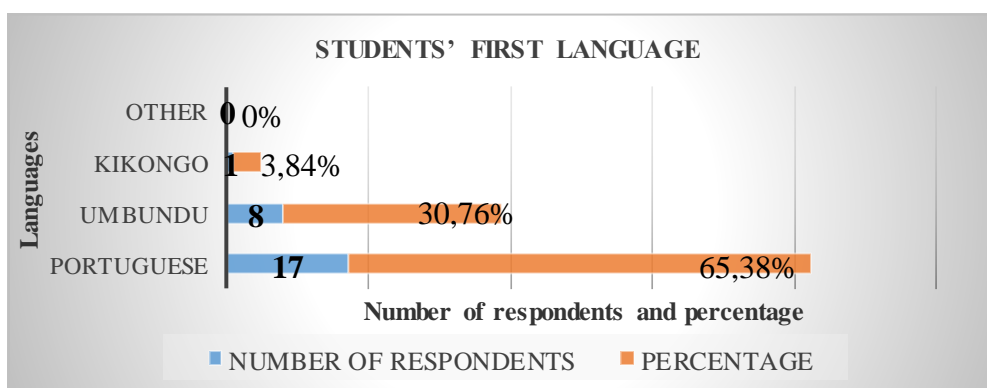


Figure 4: ELT students' first language

From the figure above it is clear that most of the respondents have Portuguese as their first language. Clarifying this, 17 respondents have Portuguese as their first

language, 8 respondents mention Umbundu, and 1 respondent points to Kikongo as his/her first language.

5. Interaction with reading material in English

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1 – 5 years	3	11.53
6 – 10 years	9	34.61
11 – 15 years	5	19.23
16 – 20 years	0	0
21 – 25 years	1	3.84
26 – 30 years	1	3.84

Figure 5: Time length of students' interaction with reading materials in English

Coming to the issue of how long students have been interacting with reading materials in English, figure 5 illustrates that just over 10% (3 respondents) say they have been reading in English for a period of time between 1-5 years, nearly 35% (9) have been doing it for 6 -10 years, 5 respondents point to 16 -20 years, 1 has been interacting with reading materials between 21 -25 years, and lastly 1 has been doing this for 26 -30 years.

Although time could be one of the criteria to infer how much experience these students have had with reading in English so far, it depends much on the contexts in which they read, the contents, and also on how they do the readings. What is likely to be true from all this is that most of the foreign language readers out of specific educational contexts tend to read in English to improve the language itself instead of the reading skills (section 1.5).

Q1. Do you enjoy reading?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	26	100
No	0	0

Figure 6: Students' attitudes towards reading

Figure 6 shows that all the respondents (26) enjoy reading.

a) The respondents who enjoy reading say it increases vocabulary, it keeps them informed about the world, especially the English-speaking countries, and it helps to expand their background knowledge and learn new things.

b) No respondents.

As a matter of fact, the reasons why they enjoy reading are really right in accordance with section 1.5.1.1 but the fact of enjoying reading, although it is the

source of motivation to read, is not a sufficient factor to help them become competent readers. They need to practise the reading strategies and skills as much as possible so that reading fluency is gained as their reading abilities and habits develop.

Q2. How much do you enjoy reading?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
A lot	17	65.38
Average	7	26.92
Not much	0	0
Not at all	0	0
Only when it is my choice	1	3.84

Figure 7: The extent to which students enjoy reading

According to figure 7, the majority said they enjoy reading a lot whereas 7 respondents (a quarter) only have average enjoyment, and 1 respondent only enjoys reading when it is his/her choice.

The students' aptitude for reading is a positive point that reading teachers should explore to the maximum. It is likely to smooth the teaching and learning process since their interest and motivation to learning are already high. Therefore, if reading materials, strategies, and tasks are appropriately selected according to the learners' context, purpose, interest and needs, the reading benefits can be reflected not only in their academic success but also in their lives in general as mentioned in sections 1.5.4, 1.5.5.2, and 1.6.1.

Q3. What sort of materials do you like reading the most?

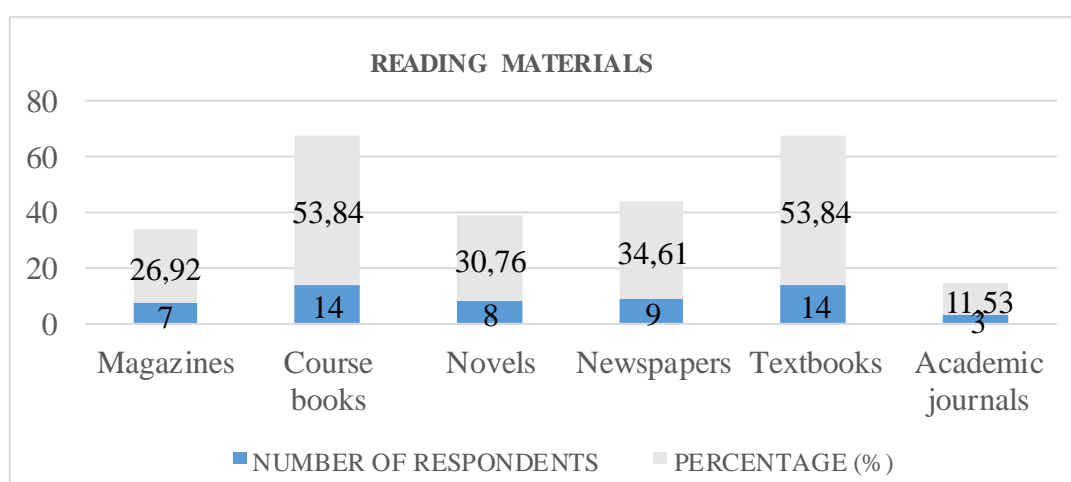


Figure 8: Sort of materials students like reading the most

The information here says that the majority of the respondents mostly read course books and textbooks. To clarify, 7 respondents, just over a quarter of the

population sample, like reading magazines, 14 or just over half like reading textbooks and course books, 8 like reading novels, 9 like reading newspapers, and only 3 like reading academic journals the most.

The importance students give to reading mostly course books and textbooks that the figure above illustrates is grounded in the fact that most of their academic works in ELT are based on these materials but considering that some subject matters in ELT are very specific and contextual, they should also include reading academic journals whose language tends to be more explanatory and precise than textbooks for example.

Q4. How often do you read for your own interest?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
I don't read unless I have to	5	19.23
1-2 times a week	2	7.69
2-3 times a week	8	30.76
3-4 times a week	2	7.69
4-5 times a week	3	11.53
Every day	6	23.07

Figure 9: Students frequency in reading for their own interest

Regarding the students' frequency in reading for their own interest, figure 9 shows that nearly one third of respondents points to 2-3 times a week. That is to say, nearly a fifth (5 respondents) do not read for their own interest unless they have to, 2 respondents read 1-2 times a week, 8 respondents read 2-3 times a week, 2 equivalent read 3-4 times a week, 3 read 4-5 times a week, and nearly a quarter (6) of the population sample read every day.

As for the question on how often students read for their own interest and academic subjects as shown in the figure above and figure 11 (see next page) respectively, there is an enormous disproportion of reading frequencies and the responses between them. Drawing some comparison in terms of percentages and the frequencies, we can recognise that there are more students reading for their academic subjects due to concern for success in their studies, which might mean that the students have poor reading habits in general and only read for academic purposes because they want to be successful. This is good, but teachers can still maximise the reading for academic subjects if more tasks for reading interaction are given to students, which in turn will maximise the use of different strategies to achieve their reading objectives, and

as a result they will improve their reading skills as emphasised in section 1.6 of the theoretical background.

Q5. Referring to your answer above, how much time do you usually spend when reading for your own interest?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
I don't read unless I have to	0	0
Less than 15 minutes	0	0
Between 15 and 30 minutes	4	15.38
Between 30 and 60 minutes	8	30.76
60 minutes or more	12	46.15

Figure 10: Time students spend in reading for their own interest

Referring to time spent when reading for their own interest figure 10 illustrates that nearly a half (12 respondents) of the sample population read for 60 minutes or more, nearly a third (8) read between 30 and 60 minutes, and 4 respondents read between 15 and 30 minutes for their own interest.

Comparing the time spent when reading for their own interest in question 5 and when reading for their academic subjects in question 7, it is clearly understood that students spend more time when reading for academic subjects than when for their own interest. Making this clearer, the figure above and figure 12 (see next page) demonstrate that 53.84% of students read for academic subjects and 46.15% read for own interest. This is good since the percentage of those reading for academic subjects is higher in relation to those reading for own interest though good readers can also naturally develop reading strategies that are helpful and transferable when they asked to read academically. Nevertheless, again as we highlighted in the previous paragraph, maximising their tasks can be the best way to involve more students in academic reading.

Q6. How often do you read for your academic subjects?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
I don't read unless I have to	1	3.84
1-2 times a week	0	0
2-3 times a week	3	11.53
3-4 times a week	3	11.53
4-5 times a week	1	3.84
When necessary	3	11.53
Every day	13	50

Figure 11: Students frequency in reading for their academic subjects

The figure above informs that half of respondents (13) read every day for their academic subjects, 3 respondents read when it is necessary, 1 respondent reads 4-5 times a week, 3 respondents read 3-4 times a week, 3 respondents read 2-3 times a week, and 1 respondent said he does not read unless he has to.

Q7. Referring to your answer above, how much time do you usually spend when reading for your academic subjects?

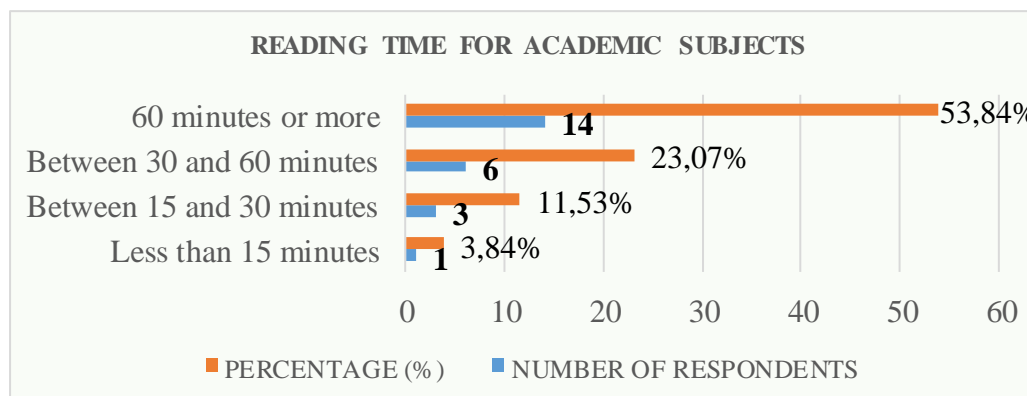


Figure 12: Time students spend in reading for their academic subjects

Concerning the time spent in reading for academic subjects figure 12 indicates that 1 respondent reads in less than 15 minutes, 3 of the respondents read between 15 and 30 minutes, nearly a quarter (6) read between 30 and 60 minutes, and over half of the respondents (14) read for their academic subjects 60 minutes or more.

Q8. Consider the motives that make you read.

RANKING	RESPONSES	ACADEMIC TASKS	WORLD INFORMATION	ENJOYMENT	LEARNING
1	N° of respondents	7	3	1	11
	Percentage (%)	26.92	11.53	3.84	42.30
2	N° of respondents	5	5	2	2
	Percentage (%)	19.23	19.23	7.69	7.69
3	N° of respondents	4	6	0	1
	Percentage (%)	15.38	23.07	0	3.84
4	N° of respondents	1	2	12	1
	Percentage (%)	3.84	7.69	46.15	3.84

Figure 13: Motives that make students read

N.B. This table is read both vertically looking at the headings of the columns offering the four motives and horizontally looking at the ranking number showing the degree of importance i.e. the most important motive is in ranking 1 and the least important one is in ranking 4.

Looking at the figure above, it makes it clear that the most important motive for reading is 'learning' with nearly half of the respondents (11); in ranking 2 both the

‘academic tasks’ and ‘world information’ are pointed as the second important motives each with nearly a fifth of the respondents (5) respectively; in ranking 3 nearly a quarter (6 respondents) mention ‘world information’ as the third important motive for reading, and finally, ‘enjoyment’ is pointed as the least motive for reading, with nearly half of the respondents (12) inquired.

Considering the results presented above we can conclude that the fact that both the ‘academic tasks’ and the ‘learning motives’ are bound to their educational context, it makes them the most relevant motives due to the academic responsibilities they are exposed to in their lives as students, and the need for academic success. And the fact that reading for ‘enjoyment’ is mentioned the least makes evident that these students do not seem to have reading habits, which makes the task of reading academic tasks even more difficult. From this perspective, we guarantee that if reading skills lessons are conducted through appropriate reading materials and strategies for academic purposes, the academic reading culture can be developed and then the results are more likely to be gratifying be it for students as well as for teachers.

Q9. Do you transfer your reading strategies in your first language to reading in English?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	16	61.53
No	9	34.61

Figure 14: Reading strategies transference from L1 to English

Regarding the possibility of transferring reading strategies from the first language to reading in English, figure 14 demonstrate that the majority of the inquired subjects (16) which represents 61.53% say they transfer their reading strategies, and 9 respondents or 34.61% do not do it.

- a) Most of the subjects said they transfer reading strategies from their first language to reading in English because they think the reading strategies are similar in both languages, and it is the starting point to help understand how other language strategies work, and how it facilitates reading comprehension.
- b) A few of the respondents do not transfer reading strategies from their first language to reading in English because they think the reading strategies vary from one language to another, some of them do not read in their first language, and others need to explore reading strategies in English language.

The fact that most of the students declare the transference of L1 reading strategies to reading in English, as displayed in the results, can be advantageous or not depending on how it is carried out. Actually, transference of strategies or skills from one language to another is unavoidable and even though sometimes this happens unconsciously, we should bear in mind that it can be positive and negative. It is positive when the transferred strategy works perfectly well in another language and negative when it is the contrary, for example, getting meaning from false cognates while reading a text. On the other hand, all things considered, transference can be beneficial for the most part of the early stages of reading skills acquisition for L2 readers but it will tend to decrease through much practice in the new reading strategies they learn.

Q10. Regarding your course reading materials, how difficult do you find them?

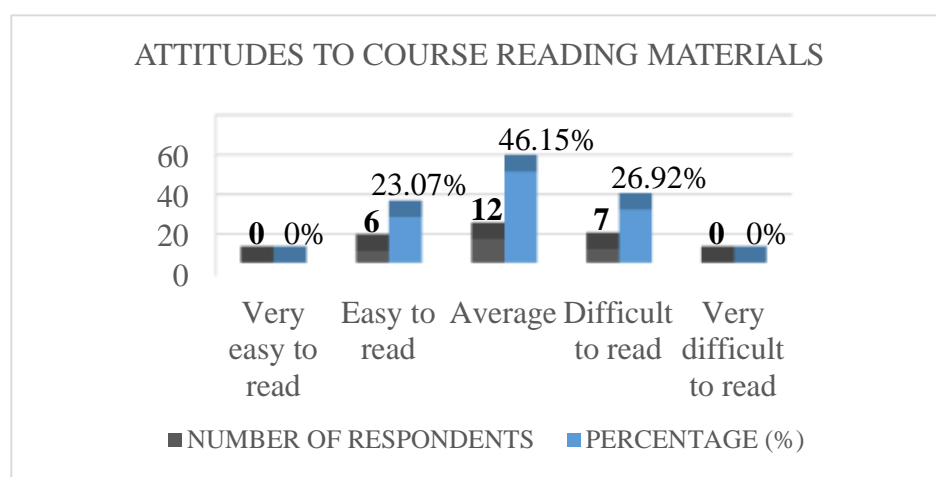


Figure 15: Students' attitudes to their course reading materials

This figure shows that nearly a quarter of the respondents (6) say that their course reading materials are easy to read, nearly half of the respondents (12) find them average, and over a third of the respondents (7) find them difficult to read.

On the issue of the degree of difficulties students' reading materials may offer it important to mention that very often reading materials are regarded as difficult or not difficult in the perspective of the language level of the materials without mentioning difficulties of the content itself. This might be the case of these students and it partly confirms outcomes of the course book evaluation regarding language level, section 2.4.3 of the research methodology which will be discussed in the same section.

With regard to question 11 which is about difficulties students face while reading their academic materials, the results in figure 16 (see next page) make it clear that most of the respondents (18) point to 'unknown words' as the main difficulty, 2

respondents mention 'answering questions about the topic of a reading text', 4 respondents refer to 'text comprehension', 3 respondents have problems in 'identifying the main points in a text', over a third of respondents (7) have difficulties in summarising a text, 1 respondent mentions drawing conclusions from the text, 1 points to taking notes while reading, 1 respondent indicates setting a purpose for reading a text, nearly a fifth (5 respondents) refer to getting an overview of a text before reading it, 3 respondents mention interpreting the visual aids, and nearly a third (8 respondents) indicate the difficulty of thinking in Portuguese while reading in English.

Q11. Which difficulties do you face while reading your academic materials?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Unknown words in the text	18	69.23
Answering questions about the topic of a reading text	2	7.69
Text comprehension	4	15.38
Identifying the main points of a text	3	11.53
Summarizing a text	7	26.92
Drawing conclusions from the text	1	3.84
Taking notes while reading	1	3.84
Setting a purpose for reading a text	1	3.84
Relating a text with what I already know	0	0
Getting an overview of a text before reading it	5	19.23
Interpreting the visual aids (e.g. <i>graphs, illustrations</i>)	3	11.53
Thinking in Portuguese while reading in English	8	30.76

Figure 16: Difficulties students face while reading their academic materials

Doing a careful analysis of the results above in terms of quantity, these difficulties constitute the main part of strategies and skills that academic readers should have under their control, and more especially those belonging to critical reading skills as highlighted in section 1.5.5 of the literature review.

The difficulties in getting an overview of the reading materials denote the lack of effective previewing strategies which include skimming and scanning (see section 1.5.5.1); and the matters of text comprehension, summarising, identifying the main points of a reading selection, and interpreting visual aids, are all related to the skills of

reading critically. So, having identified the students' main reading difficulties, the teachers of reading skills should find the most effective approaches or methodologies to help their students overcome such problems.

Q12. How do you deal with unknown words in a text while reading?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Skip them	0	0
Stop and look them up in a dictionary	12	46.15
Try to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence	7	26.92
Put them in a list, without trying to guess their meanings, and look them up in dictionary later	6	23.07

Figure 17: Students dealing with unknown words while reading a text

On the subject of dealing with unknown words in a text while reading, the figure above illustrates that nearly half (12 respondents) stop and look up the words in a dictionary while reading, 7 respondents try to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence, and 6 put the words in a list, without trying to guess their meanings, and look them up in dictionary later.

Language, in the case of English for example, can be the most highlighted difficult for the majority of our students essentially for the fact of being a foreign language. Nearly fifty percent of these students temporarily stop and check dictionary to find meanings of words while reading, or seek support of thinking in their first language (Portuguese), in order to sustain their comprehension. Again, it is seen that language problem pointed by the majority in question 11 continues being a constant here, which likely to include reliance on the first language while reading in English which can provide or not good results depending on the way it is done. So being, it is crucial to develop adequate abilities to deal with this difficulty.

Q13. Which reading texts do you feel more motivated to read?

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Texts whose topics you already know something	6	23.07
Texts whose topics you know nothing about	5	19.23
Both the above	14	53.84

Figure 18: Texts motivating students' readings

Figure 18 reveals that 6 respondents feel more motivated when reading texts whose topics they already know something, 5 of them refer to texts whose topics they

know nothing about, and 14 respondents, the majority, mention both the above responses.

The choice of the third option by more than a half of respondents (53.84%) clearly shows that most of the students have no objection to any of the other two options. In fact, the feeling of not knowing anything about a topic can be misleading since readers will generally have something to relate to a totally new text though not in depth. On the other hand, their choice may be based on the need to have a balanced reading for comprehension of texts and the chance to build a strong vocabulary while learning new things in their course reading materials.

Q14. How often do you use the following strategies while reading academic materials? Each statement below is followed by numbers 1-5 and each number means the following:

- 1- I **always** do this
- 2- I **usually** do this
- 3- I **sometimes** do this
- 4- I **rarely** do this
- 5- I **never** do this.

Figure 19, in Appendix H, demonstrates that most of the students read slowly for comprehension. Getting into details, most of the respondents (15) always read slowly their academic materials for comprehension, 9 respondents usually evaluate ideas in the text, 11 respondents sometimes confront what they read with what they think, 9 respondents rarely memorise the contents of the reading text, and 3 groups of 3 respondents never guess the meaning of unknown words from the context of the sentence, nor do they predict what the reading passage leads to next, nor memorise the contents of the reading text while reading their academic materials.

The fact that most of the students read slowly shows the lack of automatic recognition of words on the page as they cannot read from the context, nor predict their reading topics. However, we still have doubts about what 34.61% of the students mean by saying that they usually evaluate ideas in the text, given the fact that they have comprehension problems stemming from language difficulties as mentioned in the analysis and discussion of question 12, and continues to be an issue of discussion in the forthcoming section.

2.4.2. Outcomes and discussion of the interview with teachers

The results and discussion of the unstructured teacher interview are based on notes taken from each dialogue between the teacher and the interviewer, and the findings of students questionnaire as well as the literature review. So, in order to keep confidentiality and anonymity of the three teachers' data, we are going to name them: teacher A, teacher B and teacher C.

1. Do the second year ELT students have reading problems?

Teacher A: Yes, many. Most of them have very weak back ground and this is influencing their low performance.

Teacher B: I think so. If they cannot get good results, it is a sign of having reading problems.

Teacher C: Of course they do. But if they had concern with their studies, they would do something to improve.

Looking at the answers we managed to get from this question, we see that the teachers complain about poor results students show due to weak background in English language, insufficiencies in the way most of students interpret their reading materials, and the lack of concern with their studies. In point of fact, weak language background may be the result of having learnt English as a foreign language with limited exposure to it. If the level of language difficulty is high, the chance for better interpretation is likely to be low and the consequences of this are poor results that can lead to demotivation, which apparently makes students look as if they are not concerned about their studies. Thus, we think it is important that teachers motivate students through reading tasks and techniques that can promote learning of contents and improvement of their language as suggested in a task-based language teaching approach, section 1.6 of Chapter 1.

2. How are they doing in your subject?

Teacher A: These students are lazy. They do not make a lot of effort. I will not say that they are very bad in my subject but they are below my expectations.

Teacher B: Very few of them do well but the majority do not show they make an effort. This may be due to their personal occupations.

Teacher C: More or less. They seem to understand something during the class time but when it is a test the results are very low.

Regarding the issue of how the students are doing in the subjects of the three teachers interviewed, these teachers say that the students' results are below their expectations though very few of them make any great effort. What is likely to be the

main problem is the language difficulty which influences their limited comprehension. On the other hand, the academic content of the subjects, the teachers' methodologies, and the way tests are designed may also have a strong impact on the students' success or failure. If teachers applied student self-assessment apart from classroom assessment, they would be able to identify the students' individual difficulties and then help them in a more oriented way.

3. How do you usually conduct your lessons?

Teacher A: Lecture-based lessons. I give them a topic to read and then discuss in class besides the tasks they have to do.

Teacher B: Lecture-based lessons. We discuss topics in the classroom, they take notes from the discussion and then give them final remarks.

Teacher C: Lecture-based lessons. They get ready for the lesson with materials recommended to read, then we discuss in class, do some tasks, and at the end I give them some feedback on their work.

Considering the answers above, it is clear that all their lessons are lecture-based ones. This method leads students to read intensively the contents for lectures and it is appropriate at their level since discussions on the lecture topics are held afterward, and tasks are assigned. On the other hand, it may have its constraints mostly for those students who are not auditory learners and those who have difficulties in note-taking skills. So, teachers should pay attention to these details and ensure that they have considered all these issues. Moreover, they need to bear in mind that are educating teachers of English, who may tend to model how they teach in their future working contexts on how they are learning now.

4. What do you think is at the basis of their reading problems?

Teacher A: Lack of more concern with their study, weak background of the language, and reading skills.

Teacher B: Language problems, and their own occupations.

Teacher C: Apart from the language problems, I think they do not have enough time to do their readings. If they did, they would not have many problems.

Drawing attention to these answers, it is noticeable that language is a persistent problem being referred to by the teachers, including the apparent low interest they see in the students. We say 'apparent low interest' because this may not be the real situation. The behaviour of lacking interest or concern that students apparently show to teachers may be influenced by the reading difficulties and the poor results they get in the subjects. Therefore, encouraging these students to take the most from the readings is a

requirement that will positively contribute to the change of their attitudes towards the language and the contents they interact with, and in turn it will facilitate their learning. On the other hand, relating it to the next question (5), the sort of encouragement teachers provide for students can be very helpful in dealing with reading problems. In short, specific reading tasks involving reading strategies like those presented in subsections to sections 1.5.3 and 1.5.5 should be devised for these students.

5. How do you deal with their reading problems?

Teacher A: Well, I usually encourage them to read as much as possible for better understanding of their contents, and I advise them to use dictionaries, or the dictionary of language and applied linguistics, to help them check words and terminologies, because they complain a lot about difficult words.

Teacher B: I tell them to use dictionaries and consult other books with similar contents that may help to explain any difficult issues they read.

Teacher C: I usually give them freedom to use dictionaries to check the meanings of some words, use the internet for clarification or even discuss things with their mates.

Being aware of many reading difficulties students have, as the teachers pointed out here, a rise in concern for meeting students' needs and interests through conceiving appropriate reading materials and strategies to help them read fluently can be the best approach to consider.

2.4.3. Outcomes and discussion of the evaluation of the current “Reading Skill” course

The present section intends to make a quick report of the second year ELT course outline (Appendix A), and then mention the outcomes from the evaluation of the current reading skills course before the analysis and discussion of the findings. We start by saying that the course outline has two main parts: the first part begins presenting a short introduction on the relevance of the course for students, presents three objectives of the course, describes the methodology used in readings skills classes, and then refers to the course duration and the assessment. The second part is the outline of units to cover during the academic year. It consists of four units apart from the introductory unit which is about basic terminology in the subject. Unit 1 Vocabulary is intended to help students with lexical precision; unit 2 Comprehension aims to help students to comprehend reading aids, visual aids, strategies to read for the main idea or/and information; unit 3 Interpretation and evaluation is to help students interpret and evaluate whatever they read; the recently included unit 4 Basic study skills aims to help

students with basic tools to study effectively, and finally a short bibliography is included.

Regarding the outcomes from the evaluation of the reading skills course book, we are going to present the results through a description of the book based on the questions we raised for each of the selected 10 criteria (see section 2.3.3).

Looking at whether the course book aims are relevant to the students' needs, we could not find any specific section presenting the aims but they were deduced from the introduction of each unit, and we think they are relevant though in general sense of reading skills. Concerning the students' level and interest the course book caters for their interests but it does not meet the students' specific needs. The course level looks appropriate since the organization of the course book contents is gradual i.e. it moves from simple matters to complex ones. But referring to whether the book is enough to help students develop their reading skills, we do not think it is sufficient. Actually, it includes tasks on reading but the texts used are not appropriate for ELT students, and the strategies the book suggests are not sufficient. As a consequence, the exposure to their academic reading becomes limited. With regard to the text genres, the texts of this book are informational though not catering for the students' specific needs. The texts are grounded in sociology rather than in Linguistics or ELT methodology, and so they do not make it possible to explore different text genres and different discourse types. Additionally, we think the language of the course book is at an appropriate level as it does not seem to challenge the students' capacities. And the organisation of tasks seems to flow in a logical sequence but with gaps in the reading strategies. That is, the course book does not present many reading strategies as we suggest in this study, and this may limit the students' acquisition of a range of reading strategies for academic purposes. Finally, concerning authenticity, we think that those texts are authentic although based on different areas instead of linguistics or ELT methodology.

The discussion of the results from the evaluation of the current "Reading Skills" course is introduced by mentioning that the course is annual, 5 hours of classes per week which make 150 hours in 30 weeks. The time allocated for course duration is suitable to cover the units in the course outline but its distribution is not very clear (see the table in the course outline, Appendix A). An example of this is in the assessment section, where we can see that students are expected to have 4 tests of 100 minutes duration each, and the final examination of 120 minutes duration but time allocation for

assessment and feedback is not clearly stated. On the other hand, the four tests represent 40% in the final result and the final examination covers 60%. However, this course outline shows a gap since other aspects like students' assiduity and class participation are not given any percentage. In addition, the last unit BASIC STUDY SKILLS of the course outline has been included recently due to the need of helping students to deal with their academic tasks, and to get the most out of their tests and examinations.

The close relationship between the aims and the need of developing students reading skills makes the course sound apparently good but as our students' needs and interests are most specifically driven to reading in Linguistics and ELT within academic reading, so the informational texts used in the book with a relevant language level as mentioned in relation to criteria 6 and 7, should not be grounded in sociology only, although it is part of Humanities as is Linguistics, but those texts should be more related to ELT and Linguistics which are our students' areas of study. This would expose students to more specific academic reading texts on which the structure of tasks and the reading strategies used should be based in order to devise reading tasks.

Regarding the course level we think it is appropriate, since the organization of the course book contents is gradual, that is to say, the contents move from simple matters to complex ones, and the length of the course can be sufficient but more reading strategies should be included to enlarge the students' repertoire of reading strategies from which they will be able to choose those that facilitate their reading tasks more (see sections 1.5.3 and 1.5.5 of the literature review). On the other hand, concerning the issue of authenticity, we think that the texts in the course book are authentic since they are about facts extracted from a different specific area instead of Linguistics or ELT methodology. This is where our concern as reading skills teachers in ELT contexts has to come in (see section 1.6.1 of the literature review).

Finally, referring to the age of the book under evaluation, it is now 20 years old and it is essential to mention that research has provided more insights into academic reading since 1994, not to mention the contents of the texts.

The current section on findings of the evaluation of the current "Reading Skills" course brings an end to Chapter 2, which consisted of the description of participants of the research, overview of the study and methods for data collection, the presentation of the outcomes, and the analysis and discussion of the findings. In our view this background research has provided great support to help prepare Chapter 3 which will

look at the proposal for new materials in Reading Skills that should be implemented with the Angolan ELT students at ISCED-Benguela to improve their academic reading.

3. DESIGN OF NEW READING MATERIALS

The design of reading materials we are planning to include in this work involves two stages: the first stage entails the description of the selected reading materials, and the second stage covers the layout of the proposed lessons including reading strategies and tasks to implement such materials.

3.1. Description of the new reading materials

The materials we are planning to work on are based on three extracts of texts from different textbooks that are part of bibliographies used in the second year of ELT course at ISCED-Benguela.

The first extract is unit 5 “Dissolution: language loss” from *Psycholinguistics* (Oxford Introductions to Language Study) by Scovel (1998) (Appendix J), the second extract is an article “Teaching Reading Vocabulary: From Theory to Practice” from *Creative Classroom Activities* by Kral (1995) (Appendix L), and the third extract is unit 17 “Content-Based Instruction” from *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* by Richards & Rodgers (2001) (Appendix N).

Bearing in mind that selecting appropriate texts for teaching reading in specific contexts is a very challenging and delicate issue to deal with, it can be advantageous if the texts selected answer the teaching and learning needs and interests of the students and disadvantageous if the contrary occurs. In selecting these texts we used the criteria of suitability, exploitability, and readability, as claimed by Berardo (2006:62). He defines suitability as the criteria used to describe the relevance of teaching and learning materials taking into account the instructional contexts. Exploitability is used to determine whether the materials provide the possibilities of applying strategies to develop skills. And readability stands for the criteria to scrutinise whether the materials reflect an acceptable language level to students in a particular context.

Having considered the criteria above, we concluded that the three text extracts we selected can be used since they are part of the students’ course reading materials. They can be exploited to create reading tasks and activities, and the language they present is neither low nor beyond the students’ linguistic capabilities, though technical terms may be found, but as contextual clues to word meanings are generally available they should be understood, as part of the reading strategies to be developed.

However, it is still the teacher's responsibility to make sure that students are on track and the reading activities take place in an interactive and supportive classroom environment.

The next section proposes the implementation of the materials selected, taking into account the reading purpose and the appropriate strategies to promote students' academic reading skills in ELT.

3.2. Proposed implementation of new reading materials

The implementation of reading materials in classrooms entails a methodological guidance to explain how teachers should go about assigning tasks in classrooms. Given that this is a great concern for teachers of reading, the current implementation of these materials will involve a 90-minute (2 x 45 minutes) theoretical lesson and a 135-minute (3 x 45) practical lesson for each extract used. During the theoretical lesson a set of examples will be given before each of the proposed lessons to provide the students with sufficient input on the reading strategies and techniques planned to be developed in the lesson, and to familiarise them with different reading tasks and activities that imply the use of those strategies and techniques they have learnt beforehand. During the proposed practical lessons (Appendices I, K, and M), the classroom interaction is given great relevance as it can help the teacher to assess how much of the lesson content is being understood. This being so, the proposed lessons will be devised obeying the three stages of a reading lesson as we referred to in section 1.6.2 of this paper.

The first stage will be concerned with tasks to make students think and activate their background knowledge on the topic of the reading material, to create interest in it, and to set a purpose for reading. The second stage involves reading and interaction. The students will be required to take information from the text and share it in the classroom, either in pairs, groups, or whole class. It requires students to read intensively through applying suitable reading strategies for better comprehension of what they read to support their discussions. The third stage will deal with activities to help students recall what they have read and consolidate it by applying appropriate strategies such as summarising, drawing conclusions, and making generalisations. In addition to these stages, setting a homework task that keeps students practising the strategies on their own out of the classroom can have a positive impact on reading development as it intends to consolidate the reading strategies learnt. Finally, we need to highlight that in

each proposed lesson plan the following key: **Sp**, **W**, and **W–Sp**, will be used to signal whether the activities are **sp**oken, **w**ritten, or **w**ritten and **s**poke**n**.

The first proposed lesson (Appendix I) aims at developing the following reading skills: preview techniques, defining words from context clues, identifying paragraph patterns, and identifying main ideas and supporting details. So, in order to make these objectives attainable the teacher will invite students to think and individually present ideas on the topic of the material 'Dissolution: language loss' based on their background knowledge and experience. Next, each student will answer the questions in task 2 to be familiar with the structural format of the reading material which will need discussion in pairs and then the whole class. This involves skimming to find its different parts. Both the brainstorming and the preview tasks will help to create interest and set a purpose for reading the material.

At the second stage the students will individually need to locate the words in bold type and give their meanings from hints supplied in the sentence or co-text which will need discussion in pairs first, then the whole class. By locating those words, students will use and develop scanning and also deducing meaning from context skills. On the other hand, the next task will require each student to locate and read intensively the paragraphs mentioned and identify their patterns which imply the writer's intention. Finally they will look for the main ideas in those paragraphs, discuss them in pairs and then the whole class. This implies summarising parts of the paragraph and using critical thinking.

The third stage will require students to individually read almost the whole material, summarise and even generalise parts of its information, and take notes using their own words while reading. In the end, they will hold pair and whole-class discussions on their summaries and generalisations from the reading material. This helps students to deepen understanding and make ideas sink in their minds.

The last part of the lesson will be the homework. It will lead every student to continue with the lesson out of classroom. The concept map drawing develops skills in relating ideas, and it will require students to read the material again and apply most of the reading strategies covered in the classroom. As a result, there will be more reading practice on the topic, higher chances for automatising of reading strategies, and retention of information in the material.

The second proposed lesson (Appendix K) aims at developing the five-step reading strategy (SQ3R), evaluation of ideas as facts, opinions or both, and summarising techniques. Moreover, as in the introduction of the previous lesson, this one will also need students to give their ideas on the topic by answering and discussing the two first questions. This will be done first in pairs and then the whole class to develop their curiosity about the topic and set a purpose for reading about it.

At the second stage, students will individually interact with the material through the five-step strategy which requires them to:

- First, be familiar with the content layout of the topic. This encompasses skimming to find different parts of the material.
- Second, raise logical questions related to the topic, whose answers are expected to be found in the material as they read it. Here, the questions and the content layout can be discussed in pairs or whole class before the next step.
- Third, students will read the material carefully to answer the five questions raised in the second step, and they may also pay attention to important information they come across. This involves scanning, underlining or highlighting, and note taking skills.
- Fourth, students will need to write their answers individually in order to present them orally for discussion in pairs and then the whole class.
- In the last step students will need to review their answers, refer back to the notes and material to verify what they were unable to grasp while reading.

After reaching the final step of SQ3R the students will need to discuss the steps they have gone through in pairs and then the whole class.

The third stage of the lesson will involve students in judging if the underlined statements on pages 110–112 are facts, author's opinions, or both. After judging what those statements are, they will discuss them in pairs and the whole class. Then in the next activity, every student will write a summary of the material covered. It involves finding main ideas, condensing information, and taking note. Next, peers read each other's summary and comment for discussion in pair and whole-class in the end.

Finally, the concept map for homework will serve for the consolidation of the reading strategies out of the classroom. This is individual but with class discussion in the following lesson.

The third proposed lesson (Appendix M) will help students develop skills in previewing, making and supporting inferences, drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes, and making generalisations.

Similar to the two previous lessons, this one also uses brainstorming for promoting reading interest and purpose. The following tasks consist of skimming for different parts of the material and scanning for bibliographies to use in the written assignment.

The tasks in the second stage will lead each student to think about in which part of the material they can find the history of the CBI approach. They will also associate the learning theory in CBI with their learning experiences to reach a conclusion on whether there is or not a link between them, and which one seems to be more efficient.

The third stage will require every student to read almost the whole material to find the advantages and disadvantages of CBI in foreign language learning. Again, this leads students to lean on information about their context and experience to counterbalance positive or negative points of CBI, which implies making inferences and drawing conclusions. The last task of this stage demands extending the view of CBI to English for Specific Purposes in different areas of education. At this point students may, for example, generalise that most of the teaching of English should be specific. After these activities, a discussion in pairs and the whole class will be crucial to compare different standpoints of the students.

The final part of the lesson is the individual homework with class discussion in the next lesson. It is intended to help students recognise how different parts of the reading material are related, and learn how information can be visually represented for easy recall. On the other hand, it will intensify practice in different reading strategies.

Having come to the end of Chapter 3, it is essential to say that at the end of each proposed lesson the teacher will help students to reflect on and discuss what they have done and the strategies they have used. This helps the development aspect as they are not just using the strategies but are also developing them. In addition, the lessons we presented in this chapter are in essence models for reading lessons. It means that tasks and activities to develop the reading strategies mentioned and the classroom interaction may take different forms depending on the teacher's purpose and learners' needs; and for that very reason, we found it less significant to include an answer key for the

classroom tasks suggested since some of the answers will be experience and context-based. However, our aim is to produce twenty-five learning materials which can be integrated into the reading skills course over the year. Before this, we intend to pilot the proposed materials in the coming semester at ISCED before producing the rest of them in order to have an idea of how long each of these lessons will really take, and how effective they can be. Following the pilot, adaptations can be made if necessary.

The mention of aiming to produce more learning materials and pilot the currently proposed ones marks the end of Chapter 3 and next we will look at some conclusions drawn from the research conducted and also a few recommendations for reading skills teachers and those who intervene in the process of reading skills development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research project addressed its concern to the examination of reading difficulties Angolan second year ELT students have at ISCED in Benguela. This examination generated two crucial questions on why most of those students could not understand and interpret their course reading materials well enough to avoid poor results, and what could be done to help them overcome those difficulties.

Attempting to answer the questions raised, we realised that the answers pointed to the need to provide effective support for those students in order to overcome their difficulties. As a result, we intended to provide some strategies and techniques to improve their academic reading skills, which required theoretical foundations for their applicability in the context of the research. Thus, the paper was structured in three chapters:

The first chapter was the literature review on the research topic (academic reading), which is a demanding but essential area of reading. It involves not only interaction with academic texts but also understanding its nature, the theories that govern the reading process, and its teaching principles. The second chapter covered the methodology used in the research, which included the participants, overview of the study, methods used for data collection, the outcomes, and the analysis and discussion of the findings. And the third chapter dealt with the design of new reading materials, entailing their description and the proposal for implementation.

From the analysis and discussion of findings, we concluded that the students' reading difficulties are grounded in the inappropriate use of reading strategies, inappropriate materials used to teach them reading skills, language difficulties, and the absence of practice in developing reading skills and techniques through a considerable number of reading tasks. Therefore, we recommend the following:

1. Teachers of reading should help their students by selecting authentic and appropriate reading materials, i.e. those linked to the students' area of study, taking into account the criteria of suitability, exploitability and readability.
2. Teachers of reading should propose to the Head of the Department of Modern Letters at ISCED-Benguela the introduction of a more effective reading programme and new academic reading materials for the second

year ELT students, as well as the holding of regular meetings between teachers for discussion of the methodology used for teaching reading skills.

3. A workshop for the professional development of teachers of reading skills should be held as well as another aimed at the other teachers who use texts in English and teach in English. Such workshops would provide useful training for teachers and the opportunity to discuss related pedagogic issues.

4. Teachers of reading skills should use both the classroom and student self-assessments and provide effective feedback to enhance learning, and also conduct secondary research on reading methodology and introduce action research into their classrooms on a regular basis.

5. The teaching of reading skills should be made more interactive through a student-centered approach and increase the number of students' reading tasks to encourage them to apply the different strategies and skills learnt.

6. Teachers of reading should encourage their students to develop a reading culture by reinforcing their insight into the role of reading in their lives as students and its benefits in modern societies.

Until now we have only considered the reading difficulties Angolan second year ELT students have with their course subjects at ISCED-Benguela without addressing the related topic of building a strong vocabulary for academic reading, an issue that should be tackled in further research. Thus, we hope that the present study will greatly contribute to the following work, especially in the area of academic reading.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Course outline of Reading Skills



UNIVERSIDADE KATYAVALA BWILA
INSTITUTO SUPERIOR DE CIÊNCIAS DA EDUCAÇÃO DE BENGUELA
ISCED – BENGUELA
DEPARTAMENTO DE LETRAS MODERNAS
SECTOR DE INGLÊS

LICENCIATURA EM LINGUÍSTICA INGLÊS

PROGRAMA DE TÉCNICAS DE LEITURA (2º ANO)

Subject: Técnicas de Leitura (Reading Skills)

Academic year: 2014

Course duration: Annual

Total number of hours: 150 hours

Theoretical classes: 85 hours

Theoretical and practical classes: 65 hours

COURSE

Licenciatura in: Linguística/ Inglês (English Language Teaching)

INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are one area of education essential to aiding other areas of knowledge and learning. Interacting with reading skills is a cumulative process that begins at an early age and continues throughout both secondary and higher education. Therefore, the objectives of teaching reading skills are of significant value since other areas of learning are derived from the ability to read effectively.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives listed below focus on the most important understandings and abilities to be developed from the subject of *Técnicas de Leitura* (Reading Skills), in the ELT course, expected to help students to extend their abilities to:

1. read effectively in a variety of situation for a range of purposes such as gathering information, following directions, giving a response, forming an opinion, understanding information, enjoying and appreciating an array of sources of information that students are susceptible to interact with due to their interests and learning needs in this course.
2. practise the behaviours of effective, strategic readers, which include recognizing reading as an active process in which readers interact with the text to construct meaning within the context of their own understanding and experiences as well

as selecting and using the appropriate strategies and the language cueing systems and conventions to construct meaning before, during, and after reading.

3. assess strengths in reading and set goals for future growth. In here, students are expected reflect upon and assess their own reading strengths and needs, use information gathered during self-assessment and teacher assessment to set and maintain goals for improving reading abilities, consider which reading strategies work best for each task and text from a variety of reading genres.

METHODOLOGY

As reading lessons can be dull if reading is seen as a passive activity, a variety of problem-solving tasks are used to motivate students to think about reading, and there is a need to include a range of information and opinion-sharing activities in the belief that these will both motivate and help students to become better thinkers and readers by having to justify their responses to others.

During the Reading Skills classes, students are encouraged to apply what they learn not only in their course readings but also in different materials they come across with on daily basis to enrich their vocabulary. Thus a variety of teaching and learning modes are employed during the course: lectures, presentations, guided reading, and materials preparation.


COURSE DURATION AND ASSESSMENT

Students will have 5 academic hours of classes per week, for approximately 30 weeks a year. As units vary in length, the teaching should aim to complete each unit in 36 hours monthly except the first unit which will take a short time, i.e. 6 hours, for being an introduction to the subject. There will be time allocated for students' presentations, assignments writing, weekly readings, and feedback on their works.

Regarding to assessment, students are expected to have four (4) summative tests which will be added to the final examination for an average mark. The summative tests will take 100 minutes, except the obligatory final examination which will take 120 minutes. Assiduity and active participation in Reading Skills classes have an impact on students' final results which will be determined in the following percentages:

- 60% for the formative assessment, i.e. the final examination including daily assignments, assiduity and active participation in classes.
- 40% for the summative assessment, i.e. the result of four tests students are expected to do before the exam.

COURSE OUTLINE

Units	Topic	Hours			
		Theoretical	Practical	Theoretical and Practical	Total
0	Introduction	6 hours			6 hours
I	Vocabulary	20 hours	6 hours	10 hours	36 hours
II	Comprehension	20 hours	6 hours	10 hours	36 hours
III	Interpretation and Evaluation	20 hours	6 hours	10 hours	36 hours
IV	Basic study skills	20 hours	6 hours	10 hours	36 hours
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS 					150 hours

The course draws on your professional training and personal learning experiences, not only as a linguistics student but also as a teacher in training in the field of ELT where theory is aimed to link to practice, requiring you to reflect on your learning arising from the course and how this applies to your professional training. Thus, the content outlined below, in 4 units, is explored in relation to your reading needs for professional development.

Unit 0: INTRODUCTION

Objective: to familiarize students with basic concepts of Reading Skills and boost their motivation to interact with textbooks, referential materials and other sources written in English for study purposes.

Contents:

- 0.1. Reading as a process
- 0.2. Reading Strategies and Skills
- 0.3. Extensive and intensive reading
- 0.4. Skimming and scanning

Unit 1: VOCABULARY

Objective: to help students develop lexical precision and go beyond recognizing and understanding vocabulary which allows them to read widely from the everyday sources of information.

Contents:

- 1.1. Building a Strong Vocabulary
 - 1.1.1. How to find out what words mean
 - 1.1.2. Context clues to word meanings
 - 1.1.3. Word part clues to meaning
 - 1.1.4. Denotation and connotation
 - 1.1.5. Shades of meaning
- 1.2. Using a Dictionary
 - 1.2.1. How to find out what words mean
 - 1.2.2. The main entry
 - 1.2.3. The pronunciation key
 - 1.2.4. The parts of speech

- 1.2.5. Special forms and special feelings
- 1.2.6. The meanings of the word
- 1.2.7. The history of the word

Unit 2: COMPREHENSION

Objective: to help students identify the intended meaning through a variety of reading aids, visual aids, strategies to read for the main idea or/ and information.

Contents:

- 2.1. Reading Aids
 - 2.1.1. Pre-Reading
 - 2.1.2. Skimming and scanning
 - 2.1.3. Previewing a selection
 - 2.1.4. Previewing the parts of a book
- 2.2. Visual aids
 - 2.2.1. Photographs
 - 2.2.2. Diagrams
 - 2.2.3. Word charts
 - 2.2.4. Statistical tables
 - 2.2.5. Graphs
- 2.3. Reading for the Main Idea
 - 2.3.1. Key ideas in sentences
 - 2.3.2. Topics and main ideas in paragraphs
- 2.4. Reading for Information
 - 2.4.1. Fact-finding
 - 2.4.2. Major details, minor details
 - 2.4.3. Recognizing paragraph patterns
 - 2.4.4. Ordering ideas
 - 2.4.5. Listing of details
 - 2.4.6. Classification
 - 2.4.7. Comparison and contrast
 - 2.4.8. Cause and effect

Unit 3: INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

Objective: to make students be able to interpret and evaluate whatever information they read through using appropriate strategies.

Contents:

- 3.1. Making Inference
- 3.2. Understanding Figurative Language
- 3.3. Drawing Conclusions and Predicting Outcomes
- 3.4. Generalizing
- 3.5. Evaluating Ideas
 - 3.5.1. Fact and opinion
 - 3.5.2. Evidence
 - 3.5.3. The reader's opinion
 - 3.5.4. The writer's technique

Unit 4: BASIC STUDY SKILLS

Objective: to help students overcome the main difficulties involved in studying in English and be successful in academic tasks.

Contents:

- 4.1. Underlining and taking notes
- 4.3. Outlining and summarizing
- 4.5. Understanding exam questions
 - 4.5.1. Preparing for examinations
 - 4.5.2. Short-answer questions
 - 4.5.3. Essay questions

MATERIALS TO BE USED

The following are the books we will use in this course. But the teacher, will, certainly, provide trainees with the specific resources for each unit.

I. Main materials

Glendinning, E. H. and B. Holmstrom. (1992). *Study Reading: A course in reading skills for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grellet, F. (1981). *Developing Reading Skills*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiener, H.S. and C. Bazerman. (1994). *Reading Skills Handbook*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Zwier, L. J. (2002). *Building Academic Vocabulary*. Michigan: Michigan University Press.

II. Supplementary materials

Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R. R and J. Bamford. (1998). *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. and R. Schmidt. (2002). *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (3rd Edition). Essex: Longman.

Wallace, M. J. (1980). *Study skills in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BENGUELA, FEVEREIRO DE 2014

THE TEACHER

ANTÓNIO LOLINO, Lic.

Appendix B: Classroom approaches to teaching skimming

Approaches

1. Ask students to find the misplaced sentence in a paragraph. This develops awareness of topic sentences and paragraph coherence.
2. Further practice can entail the reconstruction of paragraphs from component sentences.
3. Provide several newspaper or magazine articles on the same subject, and ask students which ones deal with in a particular aspect of the topic.
4. Have students match a short text with a headline or picture.
5. Ask students to give titles to short texts.
6. Have students fit topic sentences with particular paragraphs.
7. Provide texts with an increasing number of words removed to give confidence in selective reading.

Source: *Creative Classroom Activities* by Thomas Karl (1995:107)

Appendix C: Classroom approaches to teaching scanning

Approaches

Scanning exercises are familiar to all teachers and are easy to produce. As the essence of scanning is fast retrieval of specific information, exercises can be timed and competitively managed.

1. The student races to locate a single item such as a word, date, or name in a text (e.g., indexes, dictionaries, or pages from telephone directories). Columnar material is easier to start with, as readers can be taught to sweep down the middle of columns in one eye movement.
2. The student races to locate specific phrases or facts in a text.
3. The student uses key words in questions to search for indirect answers.
4. The student matches adjoining sentences, using supplied markers expressing relationships and logical patterns.
5. The student fills in missing link words from a text or reconstructs paragraphs from sentences to help rhetorical pattern recognition.

Source: *Creative Classroom Activities* by Thomas Karl (1995:108)

Appendix D: Techniques to draw conclusions and predict outcomes

How to Form Conclusions and Predict Outcomes

1. Be sure you know the main idea of the selection.
2. Be sure you understand all the facts and details that the writer gives to support the idea.
3. Check on difficult vocabulary. [...]
4. Look out for logic of action. [...]
5. Look at the way people are described. Can you tell from their personalities – from the way they think and feel – just how they might act?
6. Ask yourself after you read: What will happen as a result of these actions or events?
7. Be careful to build your conclusion on evidence you find in what you read and not exclusively on your own opinions, likes, and dislikes. Of course you need to rely on your own experience to help you figure out how things may happen. But most of your conclusions must be based on what you read in the selection.

Source: *Reading Skills Handbook* by Wiener & Bazerman (1994:250)

Appendix E: Techniques for making generalisations

How to generalize

- Make sure that you understand the main and key details from the reading.
- Make sure that you can draw conclusions or predict outcomes based on information you have read.
- Think about how you might apply the writer's ideas in different situations.
- Don't go *too* far beyond the information the writer gives when you try to generalize. Otherwise you face the problem of making statements that are too broad in scope.
- As you state a generalisation, be particularly careful of words that do not allow exceptions. Words like *always*, *never*, *must*, *certainly*, *absolutely*, and *definitely* can rule out possibilities for any challenge to the general statement.

Source: *Reading Skills Handbook* by Wiener & Bazerman (1994:261)

Appendix F: Students questionnaire

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I would greatly appreciate it if you could complete the present questionnaire on Academic Reading in English, as a part of my project work research paper for the awarding of a Master's Degree in English Didactics at FCSH (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas), NOVA University of Lisbon. I need to gather some information about your reading habits in general and your academic reading techniques and strategies. Therefore, here is a set of questions that I would like you to answer according to your reality. I guarantee that the responses you provide will be kept anonymous.

Gender:	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	_____			
Country of origin	_____			
First language	_____			
How long have been interacting with reading materials in English?	_____			

1. Do you enjoy reading? (Circle your option).

YES

NO

a) If your answer to question 1 is YES, why do you enjoy it? (If you have many reasons, just mention the main one). _____

b) If your answer to question 1 is NO, why don't you enjoy it? (Again, just mention the main reason). _____

2. How much do you enjoy reading? (Put a cross (X) next to your option).

A lot _____; Average _____; Not much _____; Not at all _____;

Only when it is my choice _____.

3. What sort of materials do you like reading the most? Put a cross (X) in the appropriate boxes (you can choose more than one option)

Magazines ☐

Newspapers ☐

Coursebooks (e.g. *Face2Face*) ☐

Textbooks (e.g. *Psycholinguistics*) ☐

Novels ☐

Academic journals ☐

4. How often do you read for your own interest? (Put a cross (X) in the box).

I don't read unless I have to ☐

1-2 times a week ☐

2-3 times a week ☐

- 3-4 times a week ☐
- 4-5 times a week ☐
- Every day ☐

5. Referring to your answer above, how much time do you usually spend when reading for your own interest? (Choose one option and put a cross (x) in its box).

- I don't read unless I have to ☐
- Less than 15 minutes ☐
- Between 15 and 30 minutes ☐
- Between 30 minutes and 60 minutes ☐
- 60 minutes or more ☐

6. How often do you read for your academic subjects? (Put a cross (x) in the box).

- I don't read unless I have to ☐
- 1-2 times a week ☐
- 2-3 times a week ☐
- 3-4 times a week ☐
- 4-5 times a week ☐
- When necessary ☐
- Every day ☐

7. Referring to your answer above, how much time do you usually spend when reading for your academic subjects? (Choose one option and put a cross (x) in its box).

- Less than 15 minutes ☐
- Between 15 and 30 minutes ☐
- Between 30 minutes and 60 minutes ☐
- 60 minutes or more ☐

8. Consider the motives that make you read. Rank them by writing numbers 1- 4 in the circles, according to their degree of importance for you as an ELT student (1= the most important, and 4= the least important).

- To do academic tasks (assignments) ☐
- The need for world information ☐
- For enjoyment ☐
- For learning ☐

9. Do you transfer your reading strategies in your first language to reading in English? (Circle your option).

YES

NO

a) If your answer to question 9 is YES, why do you do it? (If you have many reasons, just mention the main one). _____

b) If your answer to question 9 is NO, why don't you do it? (Again, just mention the main reason). _____

10. Regarding your course reading materials, do you find them: (Put a cross (X) in the box).

Very easy to read ☐

Easy to read ☐

Average ☐

Difficult to read ☐

Very difficult to read ☐

11. Which difficulties do you face while reading your academic materials? (Put a cross (X) in the boxes of your most frequent difficulties

- Unknown words in the text ☐
- Answering questions about the topic of a reading text ☐
- Text comprehension ☐
- Identifying the main points of a text ☐
- Summarizing a text ☐
- Drawing conclusions from the text ☐
- Taking notes while reading ☐
- Setting a purpose for reading a text ☐
- Relating a text with what I already know ☐
- Getting an overview of a text before reading it ☐
- Interpreting the visual aids (e.g. *graphs, illustrations*) ☐
- Thinking in Portuguese while reading in English ☐

12. How do you deal with unknown words in a text while reading? (Cross (X) the box of the most frequent option).

- Skip them ☐
- Stop and look them up in a dictionary ☐
- Try to guess the meaning from the context of the sentence ☐
- Put them in a list, without trying to guess their meanings, and look them up in a dictionary later. ☐

13. Which reading texts do you feel more motivated to read? Choose one option and put a cross (X) in its box.

- Texts whose topics you already know something about ☐
- Texts whose topics you know nothing about ☐
- Both the above ☐

14. How often do you use the following strategies while reading academic materials? Each statement below is followed by numbers 1-5 and each number means the following:

- 1- I **always** do this
- 2- I **usually** do this
- 3- I **sometimes** do this
- 4- I **rarely** do this
- 5- I **never** do this.

After reading each statement circle the number which applies to you.

- Read quickly for general idea of the text 1 2 3 4 5
- Guess the meaning of unknown words from the context of the sentence 1 2 3 4 5
- Read quickly to answer specific questions 1 2 3 4 5
- Read slowly for comprehension 1 2 3 4 5
- Use dictionaries and other materials to check unknown words in the text 1 2 3 4 5
- Identify the main ideas in each paragraph 1 2 3 4 5
- Associate what I read with what I already know 1 2 3 4 5
- Evaluate ideas in the text 1 2 3 4 5
- Critically analyse the contents of the reading passage 1 2 3 4 5
- Confront what I read with what I think 1 2 3 4 5
- Draw conclusions from what I read 1 2 3 4 5
- Predict what the reading passage leads to next 1 2 3 4 5
- Memorise the contents of the reading text 1 2 3 4 5
- Contextualize the information I read 1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU for your COLLABORATION!

BENGUELA, APRIL 2014

Appendix G: Unstructured teacher interview guide questions

1. Do the second year ELT students have reading problems?
2. How are they doing in your subject?
3. How do you usually conduct your lessons?
4. How do you deal with their reading problems?
5. What do you think is at the basis of their reading problems?

Benguela, June 2014

(Author's data)

Appendix H: Figure 19 - Students' frequency in using strategies while reading academic materials

Figure 19 – Students' frequency in using strategies while reading academic materials

READING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES	RANKING									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	No of respondents	Percentage (%)	No of respondents	Percentage (%)	No of respondents	Percentage (%)	No of respondents	Percentage (%)	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Read quickly for general idea of the text	11	42.30	3	11.53	7	26.92	0	0	1	3.84
Guess the meaning of unknown words from the context of the sentence	3	11.53	8	30.76	5	19.23	1	3.84	3	11.53
Read quickly to answer specific questions	3	11.53	4	15.38	8	30.76	8	30.76	2	7.69
Read slowly for comprehension	15	57.69	4	15.38	3	11.53	0	0	1	3.84
Use dictionaries and other materials to check unknown words in the text	4	15.38	6	23.07	4	15.38	1	3.84	0	0
Identify the main ideas in each paragraph	7	26.92	7	26.92	4	15.38	3	11.53	1	3.84
Associate what I read with what I already know	10	38.46	5	19.23	4	15.38	1	3.84	0	0
Evaluate ideas in the text	2	7.69	9	34.61	5	19.23	6	23.07	0	0
Critically analyse the contents of the reading passage	3	11.53	5	19.23	5	19.23	6	23.07	1	3.84
Confront what I read with what I think	5	19.23	2	7.69	11	42.30	1	3.84	2	7.69
Draw conclusions from what I read	11	42.30	6	23.07	3	11.23	1	3.84	1	3.84
Predict what the reading passage leads to next	2	7.69	5	19.23	7	26.92	4	15.38	3	11.53
Memorise the contents of the reading text	1	3.84	3	11.53	6	23.07	9	34.61	3	11.53
Contextualize the information I read	7	26.92	8	30.76	4	15.38	1	3.84	2	7.69

Meaning of the ranking numbers: 1- I always do this; 2- I usually do this; 3- I sometimes do this; 4- I rarely do this; 5- I never do this.

Appendix I: Lesson Plan 1

Learning materials: extract 1 (Appendix J)

Topic: Dissolution: language loss

Duration: 2 x 45-minute lessons

The lesson in this extract is expected to develop the following reading abilities:

1. Preview techniques
2. Defining words from context clues
3. Identifying paragraph patterns
4. Identifying main ideas and supporting details

STAGE 1

Brainstorming (Sp)

The teacher starts by leading students to create ideas on the topic of the reading material to feed their reading interest.

Previewing (W-Sp)

The students are expected to preview this material by answering the following questions:

1. What are the main sections of your reading chapter?
2. Can you find any subsections under each section? If yes, what are they?
3. Your reading chapter does not have:
 - a) An introduction. True or false?
 - b) A conclusion. True or false?

STAGE 2

Dealing with unfamiliar words (W-Sp)

Look at words in bold type under subsections “The evidence from aphasia” and “The surgical evidence” and define them from their context clues.

Paragraph patterns and main ideas (W-Sp)

1. Identify the most predominant pattern of:
 - a) Paragraphs 5 and 7 under subsection “The evidence from aphasia” on page 70.
 - b) Paragraph 4 under subsection “Language loss through aging” on page 84.
2. What intentions does the writer convey with those patterns?
3. Identify the main ideas in:
 - a) Paragraph 2 subsection “The evidence from aphasia”
 - b) Paragraph under “Language loss arising from inherited disorders” page 84.

STAGE 3

Paraphrasing (W-Sp)

Explain in your own words language dissolution in the perspectives of:

1. Neurolinguistics
2. Speech and language disorders. Give some practical examples from your own context and experiences.

HOMEWORK (W-Sp)

Draw a concept map on the topic of your reading material and put related ideas in a logical explanatory sequence.

Appendix J: Extract 1 “Dissolution: language loss”

Source: *Psycholinguistics* (Oxford Introductions to Language Study) by Scovel (1998:70)

Dissolution: language loss

In many ways, this final chapter on the loss of language and the unworking of the mind is the obverse of Chapter 1, which dealt with how babies acquire their mother tongue. But unfortunately, it is not just the natural progression of the years that can exact its toll on our speech. Dissolution can be caused by an unhappy accident which assaults the language area of our brain, or by a traumatic event in our personal life, or, as researchers are just beginning to discover, even by some unfortunate roll of the genetic dice. The study of abnormalities of speech has provided psychologists with several direct insights into the psychology of language, for example the slip of the tongue data reviewed in Chapter 2. Another illustration of this type of inquiry is the large field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, which could be considered a branch of applied psycholinguistics. Here, the errors that non-native speakers make while they are learning a new language have turned out to reveal at least some of the learning processes they employ. So it is no surprise that psychologists have found that the dissolution of language, whether due to accident or age, is a rich source of information about how the human mind controls our attempts to communicate.

Neurolinguistics and language loss

The evidence from aphasia

We will begin with the most extensively studied examples of psycholinguistic dissolution, the loss of language due to brain damage. Since the brief comment on Emily Dickinson's poem quoted in Chapter 1, talk about the brain has been avoided in an attempt

to focus on the mind and on mental processes. So far we have assumed that mind and brain are relatively distinct and that it would be misleading to consider them psychologically synonymous. However a different perspective would take the other extreme and claim that the mind and brain are one.

Neurolinguistics, an offspring of psycholinguistics, investigates how the human brain creates and processes speech and language. Before we examine the findings of neurolinguistic research, we need to clear up some popular misunderstandings about the human brain and the way it functions. One example is the disproportionate attention devoted to the well-known anatomical fact that human brains have two separate and virtually identical cerebral hemispheres. Biologically, this is an unremarkable piece of information, for this bifurcation is found in all vertebrates and is itself a characteristic of the bilateral symmetry that pervades our living world. However, there exists an unusual enchantment with the brain in our current culture, so that this anatomical condition has prompted a great deal of discussion about 'left brain versus right brain' differences in human behavior. What the media and most people forget is that, anatomically, there are millions of association pathways which connect the left and right hemispheres together so that in *normal* brains any information in either hemisphere is immediately shared with the other. The function of the **corpus callosum** (the largest sheath of association pathways connecting the two hemispheres) is often unknown, ignored, or misunderstood so that nowadays it is often represented as a 'fact' that there are 'left-brained' and 'right-brained' people in the same way that individuals can be left- or right-handed. Misconceptions like these about neurology lead, quite naturally, to misconceptions about the relationship between the brain and mental states or linguistic structures. But in this final chapter, it is time to take a look at the brain and to acknowledge the legitimacy of neurolinguistics as a sub-field of the psycholinguistics of language. Sadly, we learn the most when this precious piece of anatomy is damaged.

We can get an idea about the way the brain controls human speech and language without resorting to an anatomy text or arranging to view a craniotomy. Take your left hand and cup it over your left ear so that the palm of your hand is clapped over

your ear hole. You will find that your hand covers most of the left side of your head and that the first two fingers of your hand extend upward almost to the top of your scalp. If you could see the interior surface of your brain lying under your hand (as surgeons would if they had flapped open the left side of your skull to expose the brain in a craniotomy), you would be able to identify, after some scrutiny, two vertical strips of brain tissue running down from the top of your head, roughly the same size and in the same position as the first and second finger of your hand. The more forward strip, the one covered by your middle finger, is called the **motor cortex** and is the primary area of the brain for the initiation of all voluntary muscular movement. The strip just parallel to this, and covered by your index finger, is the **sensory cortex**. This is the primary location for processing all sensations to the brain from the body.

Because our central interest is in language and not in the anatomical mapping of human neurology, we are most concerned with the location of the control of speech organs and the sensation of speech sounds within these two strips. And here, we run into one of the many oddities of our neurological system. It is, in fact, the top part of the brain which controls the lower extremity of the body and vice versa. In an equally counterintuitive manner, the left side of the brain is responsible for the right side of the body and vice versa. It follows that the tops of the motor and sensory cortices take care of the movement and sensation of your feet, and the bottom parts of these two strips are responsible for your head. Returning to the hand-on-the-head illustration, the tips of your first two fingers lie over the area of the brain which controls your feet (your right foot to be specific), and the base of those two fingers, where they meet your palm, cover the motor and sensory areas which control your head, mouth, and throat. Because language is represented for most people in the left hemisphere, the area of the brain which is crucial for the production and comprehension of human language is covered by the spot where your first two fingers join your hand. Because of their importance to linguistic communication, these two locations, motor and sensory, are named after the two nineteenth-century neurologists who first described their unique linguistic functions. The bottom portion of the motor cortex, the area that is slightly

more forward and is covered by the base of your middle finger, is called **Broca's area**, named after a French physician, Paul Broca, who also helped coin the term **aphasia**, the loss of speech or language due to brain damage. Just behind this area, at the lower portion of the sensory cortex, the spot covered by the base of your index finger, is **Wernicke's area**, named after Broca's Austrian contemporary, Karl Wernicke.

These discoveries of the location of speech centers in the cerebral cortex well over a century ago also helped to demonstrate that the human brain differs from the brains of most other animals because it was not **equipotential**. For many species, including mammals like rats, much of the brain seems to function holistically; if half a brain is damaged, the animal seems to lose about half of its functions, so approximately any area is equal in potential importance to any other area. Not so with the human brain, as Broca, Wernicke, and other nineteenth-century neurologists discovered and as has been further confirmed and refined by a century of research. One of the first pieces of evidence that certain functions of human behavior were localized and were not diffusely represented throughout the brain was this nineteenth-century discovery that different areas of the brain controlled different language functions. Speech production resided largely in Broca's area and comprehension of language was confined pretty much to Wernicke's area. By localizing specific functions to particular areas, it seems that human brains create more compact and powerful neurological 'computers' than those employed by most other animals, which tend to rely more on the equal potential of any area of their cortex for functional processing.

But like all animals, humans are susceptible to injury, probably even more susceptible than animals when it comes to the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord). Suppose a friend or relative of yours was unfortunate enough to sustain an injury that just happened to be located in either of these two relatively small areas of the brain straddling the top of your left ear. The damage could arise from a loss of blood supply to that location due to a stroke, or from an invasive injury like an automobile accident or a gunshot wound. There are at least two consequences to misfortunes like these that make the central nervous system unique in

relation to any other part of the body. First of all, because there are no pain receptors in the brain, any distress that is felt comes from the tissues that surround the brain, the source of discomfort in a headache, and not the brain itself, and that is why a stroke, unlike a heart attack, is not necessarily a painful experience. The second irony is that of all the tissue that comprises the human body, the nerves in the central nervous system do not regenerate. Once they are damaged, they do not grow back, so brain injury is permanent, though, given the right circumstances, functional loss is sometimes recovered, most frequently within a year of the initial injury.

Let us return now to the consequences of injuries to the two 'language centers' of the brain. There are many different types of aphasia, varying in their degree of severity and the way they might overlap, but the two classic types are representative of this malady. Damage to Broca's area usually affects one or all of the stages of speech production reviewed in Chapter 2. **Broca's aphasia** is characterized by speech and writing which is slow, very hesitant, and in severe cases, completely inhibited. Although automatic speech and function words can remain almost unaffected, usually the production of key words, like subjects, verbs, and objects, is hesitant and inaccurate. Nevertheless, comprehension is relatively spared. If the injury is located in a more posterior position, just to the back of the upper ear, then patients usually experience **Wernicke's aphasia**; speech production and writing are pretty much intact, but because the sensory cortex is damaged, patients experience a great deal of trouble processing linguistic input. Although speech flows more fluently and comfortably than for Broca's aphasics, patients afflicted with Wernicke's aphasia tend to ramble somewhat incoherently. Part of this stems from their inability to process conversational feedback due to the problems they confront in comprehension. Remember that in both types and for most cases, aphasia occurs only if either of these two areas are damaged in the *left* hemisphere of the brain. Broca's and Wernicke's areas are unilateral, and reside only in the left hemisphere, at least for almost all right-handed people. Damage to the parallel areas in the right hemisphere does not normally affect language production or comprehension, although, as neuro-psychologists have discovered, it affects other types of human

behavior, for example the correct recall and naming of familiar faces, or the ability to read maps.

A good illustration of the type of language dissolution these two types of aphasia create is found in the following excerpts from speech produced by a Broca's and a Wernicke's patient. Although written transcripts fail to capture many of the features of speech so conspicuous in a tape recording or face-to-face interview, the examples printed below reveal remarkably different patterns of linguistic production for the two patients. The Broca's aphasic struggles to search for appropriate words and ends up producing mostly nouns. He also seems unable to use grammatical function words to string phrases and clauses together, although his intention to communicate is almost painfully apparent. The speech of the Wernicke's patient, on the other hand, appears to be a series of cohesive phrases and clauses, without coherence or apparent communicative purpose.

Broca's aphasia

[The patient is attempting to describe an appointment for dental surgery.]

Yes ... ah ... Monday ... er ... Dad and Peter H ..., and Dad ... er ... hospital ... and ah ... Wednesday ... Wednesday, nine o'clock ... and oh ... Thursday ... ten o'clock, ah doctors ... two ... an' doctors ... and er ... teeth ... yah

Wernicke's aphasia

[The patient is trying to describe a picture of a family in a kitchen.]

Well this is ... mother is away here working her work out o'here to get her better but when she's looking, the two boys looking in the other part. One their small tile into her time here. She's working another time because she's getting too ... (from H. Goodglass and N. Geschwind. 1976. 'Language disorders (aphasia)' in E. C. Carterette and M. P. Friedman (eds.): *Handbook of Perception: Volume 7. Language and Speech*. Academic Press, pages 389-428)

The surgical evidence

Neurolinguistics has progressed enormously since the nineteenth century, and as a consequence of advances in diagnosis and surgery, the particular sub-field known as **aphasiology** (the study of aphasia, or loss of speech) has flourished especially. Two kinds of surgical operation have a particular bearing on questions of language dissolution. One of these procedures is **hemispherectomy**. In rare cases, when a life-threatening neurological condition is found in either the left or right hemisphere of a patient (for example a rapidly growing malignant tumor), and there is no alternative to surgical treatment, neurosurgeons will open up the affected side of the skull and remove almost the entire left or right hemisphere! This procedure used to be performed even on adults, but now it is fairly much restricted to children under the age of ten. There is a dramatic difference between the effects of this operation on adults and young children when it comes to speech. When an adult undergoes a left hemispherectomy, he or she becomes completely aphasic, except for a few words of automatic speech, and this is why such operations are rarely performed nowadays. Conversely, hemispherectomies performed on young children, quite amazingly, do not lead to loss of speech.

How do we reconcile this neurolinguistic phenomenon with the claims made earlier that language centers are localized to specific areas of the left hemisphere? Certainly, the key factor here is the age of the brain. During the first decade of life, the human brain is continuously evolving and growing. Cognitive and linguistic functions have not yet been localized to specific areas (although these sites appear to be genetically predetermined), and this allows for the **neuroplasticity** of the still maturing brain. When a young brain encounters traumatic injury, even to the extent of losing an entire cerebral hemisphere, because it is still maturing, and because the primary areas of cognitive and linguistic functioning have not undergone **canalization** (established as neuronal networks), a child does not suffer the extensive functional loss that an adult does. Consequently, we can see that the effects of neurological damage on linguistic performance are not strictly predictable from anatomical change. In this case, for example, age is a critical factor.

Does this mean that children are spared all neuropsychological

or neurolinguistic disadvantage? Certainly not. Childhood aphasia exists, though it is much less common than its adult counterpart, and congenital language disorders such as autism, to be discussed in a moment, very likely stem from neurological abnormalities. But we can see even after this briefest of excursions into neurolinguistics that it is difficult to forge clear-cut links between the neurology of the brain and the language of the mind.

A second, and better known, surgical procedure which also has neurolinguistic relevance is the **split-brain operation** which was developed in the 1970s to help treat specific and rare cases of severe epilepsy. This ancient affliction is most often caused by discharges in the motor cortex in one hemisphere that are instantly transmitted to the corresponding cortex of the other hemisphere via the corpus callosum. There are certain severe and singular forms of epilepsy which remain unaffected by pharmacological treatment, and split-brain surgery was developed to spare sufferers from the terrible trauma of major seizures. In an operation much less dramatic than a hemispherectomy, the surgeon makes a front-to-back incision along the corpus callosum, severing most of the association pathways which connect the left and right hemisphere. Although this might sound almost as grim as a hemispherectomy, there are actually very few negative consequences to the operation, and this rests largely on the fact that all of our senses are bilaterally represented. Our left eye, for example, is controlled by both hemispheres: the left visual field (everything we see to the left of center) is controlled by the right hemisphere and the right field (everything we see to the right of center) by the left hemisphere. The same is true for the right eye, and so even after the corpus callosum is cut, in normal, everyday situations, information from either eye goes to both hemispheres.

A number of unique neurolinguistic consequences of this surgical operation have been discovered. Most daily functions, including speech and language were found to be unaffected; it was only under experimental conditions that certain strange, linguistic processing constraints emerged. For example, when specially selected words were flashed very rapidly on a screen, normal subjects read them as single words, but these same words were read as only *half* a word by the split-brain patients. Take the following illustration. When the word 'HEART' was flashed to subjects on a

screen, with the middle of the word right in the center of the field of vision, normal subjects had no trouble in reading it. When the same word was flashed to split-brain subjects, however, they read only the right half; that is, they claimed they saw just the word 'ART', and seemed to miss completely the 'HE' on the left.

HEART

HEART

[What normal subjects read.] [What split-brain patients read.]

The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that when a word like 'HEART' is flashed momentarily in front of our eyes, the image does not last long enough for us to read it completely, but we can reconstruct it as one word because our corpus callosum instantly transfers all linguistic information which enters our *right* hemisphere from the left visual field into our *left* hemisphere, the one that contains the language centers which comprehend and produce language. These centers immediately read this linguistic stimulus as one word, 'HEART'.

Under non-experimental conditions, when there is much more than the merest fraction of a second to catch a word, a split-brain patient has time to scan back and forth and ensure that both the right and the left side of the word are caught by the right visual field and hence fed directly to the left or linguistic hemisphere. The word is then read correctly, just as it was by the patient before surgery. But under these experimental conditions, when words are flashed too fleetingly to be scanned, the split-brain patient is confined to reading only half the field of vision, always the right half. Since 'ART' is an English word, and since it is quickly fed from the right visual field directly to the left hemisphere, it is the only word that is comprehended. Because it lies in the left visual field, 'HE' is just as quickly picked up by the right hemisphere, but since the neurological bridge between the two hemispheres has been cut, the lexical information remains trapped in the right hemisphere, which is not as literate as its cerebral twin. But the left side of the brain does not monopolize *all* of language processing; there are secondary or tertiary linguistic areas even in the right hemisphere, so split-brain patients are dimly aware that there is more than just the word 'ART' staring them in the face. When they are

asked, however, to point with their left hand to the word they have just read ('ART'), patients usually point to the letters 'HE'. Apparently, they are influenced by the stranded memory of the word, 'HE' that is floating in the periphery of consciousness in the right hemisphere.

What do the split-brain studies tell us about neurolinguistic processing? Some of them have been interpreted to the public as support for the left versus right brain duality. They have been viewed as additional evidence that the left brain houses the logical and conscious mind whereas the right brain is home to the intuitive and the unconscious. But it is not very useful to draw such gross generalizations about normal neuropsychological processing from the results of split-brain patients in experimental studies. It is an enormous leap of faith and logic to assume that the inability of patients to fully process a word flashed momentarily on a screen because their corpus callosum has been severed due to severe epilepsy can be generalized to the claim that, in normal people in everyday situations, the right hemisphere is the seat of intuitive, nonconscious thinking.

Research into aphasia, and studies of hemispherectomy and split-brain patients, has given rise to two superficially contradictory claims about the manner in which the brain processes language. On the one hand, there is irrefutable evidence that for the vast majority of adults, the production and comprehension of speech is located in two closely situated but clearly distinct areas of the left hemisphere, Broca's and Wernicke's, and this localization of function is not fully completed until about ten years old. An incidental corollary of this fact is that the exceptions, who number from five to ten percent of any given population, tend to be left-handers. For them, there is a greater probability of language being localized to the right hemisphere or being represented bilaterally. On the other hand, in contrast to these claims about the neurolinguistic primacy of the left hemisphere, research in all areas of language dissolution shows that human linguistic ability does not *solely* reside in these two relatively small areas on one side of the brain. The left-handed exceptions just cited are a singular counter-example. But even for the preponderance of people, who are right-handed, more and more evidence has implicated the role of secondary and even tertiary areas of speech

processing. The 'HEART' example described above provides support for this.

These two findings alone are enough to call into question the validity of neuropsychological models which neatly map various human behaviors on to the brain like a modern version of phrenology, the belief, popular in the nineteenth century, that the configurations of the skull's surface indicated the presence of different emotions. They suggest, instead, that models which use the analogy of a hologram might be more representative of how the human brain works. Holography is a modern form of photography which uses lasers to mold thousands of holograms together to create a rough, but identifiable, three-dimensional picture of an object. Each hologram, or individual cell, in that picture has the potential to depict the entire picture. In other words, holography creates a single picture from many individual depictions of the original. Genuine 'neurolinguistic programming' seems to work in the same way. There are primary locations in the brain for all the complex human activities such as language; nevertheless, at the same time, language is diffusely represented in several other locations as well. The holographic metaphor also helps explain why neuroplasticity is lost. The different areas of the young brain can be neurologically programmed to fulfill a variety of functions, but as the child's environment and experience grow in complexity, these various functions are localized to allow for a more efficient allocation of neurological tissue. At about the onset of puberty, as the child enters an adult world, neuroplasticity is lost because localization is complete. But, like the hologram which is both one picture and many, the overall control of language and speech is both localized and diffuse.

Speech and language disorders

Dissolution from non-damaged brains

Up to this point, we have been discussing examples of language dissolution that are the result of operations on the brain, but these cases are rare when compared to the many ways in which an individual's language can deviate significantly from social norms. Their number is too vast to summarize adequately here, but a brief review of two representative examples, stuttering and

autism, will help to reinforce several themes and insights that have been brought out earlier in this book.

Stuttering, also referred to as stammering, is one of the most common articulation problems encountered by speech pathologists, at least in most English-speaking countries. Like the slips of the tongue reviewed in Chapter 3, stuttering reveals psycholinguistic information about how speech is organized and planned. Research has demonstrated, first of all, that stuttering is not random: it does not punctuate our speaking spasmodically, like a hiccup. It occurs, most frequently on the initial word of a clause, the first syllable of a word, the initial consonant of a syllable, and on stop consonants (like /p/, /t/, /k/). There is an enormous and somewhat controversial research literature on the causes of stuttering, and explanations range between two classic psycholinguistic extremes.

On the one hand, the **Johnson theory** represents the extreme behavioral view and claims that stuttering originates from traumatic events occurring in early childhood when overly sensitive parents (who often themselves were childhood stutterers) and/or primary school teachers are too assiduous in attempting to ensure that the child speaks fluently. Because language is such a fundamental component of human socialization, caretakers often display disproportionate attention to a child's speech compared to any other aspect of its development. The same parent or teacher who criticizes a four-year-old for blurting out 'P-p-p-please!' is unlikely to comment on the child's less than perfectly coordinated way of walking, for example.

The opposite extreme of this behavioral explanation (which, as might be imagined, has never been much appreciated by either parents or teachers!) is an equally long-standing neurological explanation. The **Orton/Travis theory** states that stammering is caused by the absence of unambiguous lateralization of speech to the left hemisphere. Recall that roughly five per cent of the population (about half of all left-handers) are probably *right* hemisphere dominant for speech and that another two point five per cent (about a quarter of the left-handed population with a few right-handers thrown in) probably has *neither* side of the brain dominant for language and speech. According to this neurologically based explanation, this latter group of exceptional children

often become stutterers, largely because the brain lacks a fully established primary language center and is therefore indecisive about how to initiate speech.

Both of these clearly contrasting views use the same statistics for support. Stuttering is usually stereotyped as more characteristic of boys than girls, of left-handers than right-handers, and is seen to run in families. The Johnson theory explains these demographics in the following manner. Since caretakers and primary-school teachers are usually women, and since girls usually supersede boys in linguistic ability at an early age, boys' speech receives more of the inordinate attention and criticism that fosters frustration and stuttering behavior. As they strive to cope with the difficult task of learning their mother tongue, left-handed boys are a minority that are especially singled out and receive excessive attention among all children. The Johnson theory also tries to account for why stammering tends to run in families. Parents and teachers who grew up in families of stutterers, or who stuttered themselves as children, are more apprehensive of their own children, or pupils, growing up with this disability. But the very same evidence is used to account for the Orton/Travis theory. Why boys? In some recent neurological experiments with rats, it was found that atypically high amounts of testosterone can sometimes decrease the chances that some aspect of behavior will get lateralized to one hemisphere or the other, hence the possibility that the bilateral representation of language will occur more frequently in boys than in girls. Why left-handers? For both sexes, about half of all left-handers do not have language represented in the left hemisphere, and about a quarter of all left-handers have bilateral control for speech. And why does stammering run in families? This may be because there is a genetic component to its origins. For example, it could be similar to color-blindness, which appears most frequently among males but is passed down genetically via the mother.

There are many weaknesses in both of these extreme positions. Perhaps the most telling criticism is that the stereotypes just described are inaccurate. For example there is little statistically significant support for the notion that stuttering is disproportionately represented in left-handed boys. Over the decades since the promulgation of the Johnson and Orton/Travis theories, there

has been increasing evidence that it is a complex disorder that varies not only among individuals, but is also highly dependent on situational differences. Most experts believe it derives from the complex interplay of both neurological and environmental causes and can be reduced or cured with treatments which include the use of delayed auditory feedback, behavior modification, music and rhythm, or even medication. In one manifestation or another, all of this work can be viewed as applied psycholinguistics, for it not only attempts to account for the way the mind can control or miscontrol speech, it also tries to apply this knowledge to rectify problems.

All of this raises an extremely important point, one that pervades every aspect of the psychology of language. Language is not solely individual behavior: it is intricately interwoven into the norms, beliefs, and expectations of *society*, and these serve to define what is perceived as 'normal' or 'abnormal' linguistic behavior. So it is with stuttering. Though there is some indication that stuttering universally affects about one per cent of any population of people, the percentage of stuttering varies from country to country, as diagnosed by social institutions like schools. Even between countries which share a language, like Britain and the United States, speech behavior can be interpreted differently because of contrasting social expectations. A moderate amount of stammering in an older man, especially an academic, is completely acceptable in England, but this same behavior is viewed as a borderline speech disorder in America. One does not have to look at brains or to caretakers to see that, for many language disorders, the disability is not just in the mouth of the speaker but it is also framed by the ears of the listeners.

Another disability that is fairly well-recognized though, fortunately, much less common, is **autism**. Like that of stuttering, its cause has long been disputed by opposing camps, who have argued for either behavioral or neurological origins, with the latter receiving the most recent support. But like the research into stuttering, the more we study autism, the more we see that there are several types, and the severity of the disability also varies considerably. Unlike stuttering, however, it is not simply a language impairment, and the first signs of this disorder are apparent in infants, before speech has really developed. An autistic infant

exhibits a bizarre disregard for human interaction and, in contrast to a normal child, ignores eye and face contact. Perhaps because this condition creates a lack of social interaction and early communicative bonding, the autistic infant quickly lags behind in achieving the natural milestones of speech production, and within a year or two, the significance of the disease becomes conspicuous. This fundamental inability to bond with people, coupled with the linguistic consequences of this constraint, creates a behavioral pathology severe enough to be labeled a psychosis. In fact, autism is often referred to as childhood schizophrenia.

Language loss arising from inherited disorders

It is now popular to suggest a genetic basis for many forms of human behavior. Genetics should be used as a court of last resort, not as the first line of defense, but recent work in psycholinguistics has uncovered certain rare examples of how language dissolution appears to be inherited. In these cases, which are mercifully rare, we have the truly curious situation where the genes which carry the human heritage for speech are countermanded by an inherited defect that is transported by the same genetic code. With one exception, these inherited disabilities do not attack language directly; loss of linguistic capacity is a consequence of the more global loss of all higher cognitive functions. The least rare of these disabilities is **Down's syndrome**, a disorder that occurs about once in every 600 births and, along with marked anatomical abnormalities, leaves the child moderately to severely impaired in all cognitive functions. The degree of language disability is directly proportionate to the amount of cognitive damage, and there are cases of less severely afflicted children not only acquiring their mother tongue, but learning a second language as well. The enlargement of the tongue in Down's syndrome creates poor articulation, and though comprehension is not significantly affected, expressive speech is hesitant and limited, in a manner reminiscent of Broca's aphasia.

Language loss through aging

There is a humorous birthday card which reads on the front 'Congratulations! You have reached the age when anything

goes!', and then listed inside are 'Hearing, Eyesight, Memory, Hair, etc.'. Though the humor expressed might diminish proportionally with the age of the card's recipient, it is true that a reduction in physical and mental abilities often does accompany the aging process. In a slightly more specific way, Jaques' famed soliloquy in *As You Like It*, quoted in Chapter 1, echoes the same sentiment. As we progress through our 'seven ages', in some ways we approach again the condition of the infant we once were, with our 'big manly voice turning again toward childish treble'. As we have already seen in this chapter, various afflictions, neurological, environmental, or hereditary, mean that humans sometimes have the gift of language taken away from them prematurely and unnaturally. As we gradually progress through Shakespeare's seven stages, however, many of the rest of us reach a point when speech is denied us as part of the natural process of aging. Maybe it is on account of our fascination with youth and the future potential it symbolizes, but the study of language dissolution among older people has been practically ignored by psycholinguists. Compared to the massive number of studies conducted on all aspects of first language acquisition, there is a significant lack of psycholinguistic research on language dissolution among the aged. This is particularly unfortunate considering the ever-increasing size of our older populations and the potential revelations such investigations might furnish for the psychology of language. Most assuredly, this is one area of psycholinguistics that should, and probably will, receive more attention in the future. We might begin by asking, was Shakespeare right? Does language loss due to aging recapitulate in reverse order the stages of language acquisition we reviewed in Chapter 2?

The most conspicuous faculty eroded by the aging process is memory, and since language represents a major component of **Long Term Memory (LTM)**, it is inevitable that linguistic performance is adversely affected by any form of significant deficit in LTM. But here as in any other aspect in the study of human behavior, we must guard against anecdotal overgeneralizations. As people grow older, they often complain about difficulty with recalling names, and they perpetually attribute this deficiency to growing old. But the more plausible explanation for this problem is that a sixty-year-old knows considerably more people and more facts

than a sixteen-year-old, and since access to LTM is capacity limited, it is more logical to assume that the more you have to remember, the easier it is to forget.

One large study of people's ability to remember fifteen words on a grocery list found that up to the age of fifty, LTM improved slightly, but after the fifth decade, subjects typically forgot one item for every successive decade of life. This loss is not as profound as is commonly believed; the same study found that when the participants were asked to recall the list after a forty minute delay, there was no difference between the younger and older subjects in their LTM ability. Contrary to popular conjecture then, it appears that the aged retain about as good an LTM as young people. The memory constraints that may become evident as we get older seem to be due primarily to **Short Term Memory (STM)** constraints, or limitations on inputting and accessing the material to be recalled. No definitive research has been undertaken on the effects, if any, of the aging process on specific aspects of language, such as phonology or syntax, but the little evidence just reviewed on the impact of aging on lexical recall indicates that language remains remarkably robust, even in the face of the natural decline that accompanies the loss of physical and mental abilities. Remember, too, that we cannot measure aging directly by chronological years; geriatrics has long taught us that age is more directly a manifestation of health than of the calendar.

This is evident from the occurrence of **Alzheimer's disease** which affects millions of individuals each year. For as yet undetermined reasons which appear to involve both hereditary and environmental factors, the brain of an AD patient deteriorates prematurely, and this loss has profound and ultimately injurious effects on every aspect of a person's performance. Again, serious psycholinguistic study of AD has just begun, but the research which has been undertaken shows that speech and language are not affected in isolation. Linguistic functions gradually disintegrate together with those of emotion, cognition, and personality. A recent study of the written language of older people concluded that those who wrote more complex compositions (i.e. who used more subordination in their sentences) seemed to have a much better chance of not succumbing to AD compared to those who used simpler sentence structures. Correlational studies like this

must be interpreted cautiously. The data most probably means that the same cognitive development that promotes writing complexity makes a person less susceptible to AD. It should certainly not be interpreted to mean that classes in advanced composition will develop immunity to this terrible illness.

Often in psycholinguistics, research in another language offers fresh and valuable information in an area of psycholinguistics that is not directly accessed by the linguistic structures of English. Such is the case with some outstanding work by Japanese researchers in neurolinguistics and AD. The Japanese writing system is notably complicated, consisting, for the most part, of two very separate orthographies: *kana*, which are syllabic spellings (IOU for 'I owe you' would be a rough equivalent), and *kanji*, which are ideographs borrowed from Chinese. When literacy tests were conducted on Japanese AD patients, investigators discovered that while the reading and writing of *kanji* was drastically impaired, these skills were quite well preserved when applied to *kana*, at least in the initial stages of AD. Again, the evidence suggests that language is no different from other aspects of human behavior; the more complex the endeavor (in this case, the processing of *kanji*), the greater the degree of affliction from the disease.

Concluding summary

What do all these examples of speech dissolution tell us about the nature of language and mind? Well, for one thing, given the unbelievable complexity of human language, it is quite astounding to realize that among the world's more than five billion speakers, only a remarkably small number of them are afflicted with any of the communicative anomalies reviewed in this chapter. When we consider the intricacy of acquisition, production, and comprehension involved in just one language, our mother tongue, and then add to this the fact that nearly half the world's population are bidialectal if not bilingual, and are able to process two distinct varieties of language successfully, it is amazing that dissolution is a comparative rarity and not the norm. So the first thing we learn from all of these studies of aberrant language is that because they are abnormal, the everyday use of language without disorders in

acquisition, production, or comprehension is a wonder of miraculous proportions.

Second, we can acknowledge from the neurological examples which were reviewed in this chapter that there is strong evidence, from the way the brain processes information, for the unique independence of language. In all varieties of aphasia and in many of the neurolinguistic studies of patients who have undergone major brain surgery, it is plain that language and speech enjoy a unique neurological status in the human brain, and we find support for the notion that the capacity to comprehend and produce language is hard-wired to the mid-central area of the left hemisphere for most adults. At the same time, evidence was presented to indicate that speech and language are not always narrowly and immutably localized to one area of the brain. For young children especially, language seems to be more diffusely controlled by both hemispheres. Indeed, one area of neurolinguistics that needs to be more fully examined is how and why language shifts from a broader, bilateral representation in young children to a narrower, unilateral control in adolescents and adults. An even more intriguing puzzle remaining to be solved is why the neurolinguistic evidence tends to support the independence of speech and language from other aspects of behavior, whereas the psycholinguistic data suggests just the opposite—that language is part and parcel of cognition and perception.

When we turn to examples of dissolution that do not seem to be caused by brain damage, we discover that the data from research on speech and hearing disorders does not differ significantly from the information we have on normal development. The study of stuttering, for example, endorses the notion that the formulation stage is an important level of speech production. But in general, all of these disabilities, irrespective of their origins, whether behavioral, as in stuttering, or clearly genetic, as in DS, or the natural forces of maturation, as in aging, or due to a still unknown combination of forces, such as autism, point to the third and most significant conclusion. By and large, language seems to be closely related to other aspects of human behavior, particularly to cognition.

In summary, the disruptions in the environment or in the genetic code that bring about speech and language disabilities

never seem to single out language: they affect linguistic communication because they afflict cognition and perception as a whole. For this reason, psycholinguistics is drawn by language into a more general inquiry of the workings of the human mind.

Appendix K: Lesson Plan 2

Learning materials: extract 2 (Appendix L)

Topic: Teaching Reading Vocabulary: From Theory to Practice

Duration: 2 x 45-minute lessons

This lesson is intended to develop the following reading abilities:

1. Using the SQ3R strategy
2. Evaluating ideas
3. Summarising techniques

STAGE 1

Brainstorming (W-Sp)

1. Think of possible strategies to teach reading vocabulary. Account for them.
2. What is the impact of vocabulary on the reading process?

STAGE 2

SQ3R strategy (W-Sp)

1. Survey the article ‘‘Teaching Reading Vocabulary: From Theory to Practice’’
2. Questions: write 5 logical questions relating to the title of the article.
3. Read the material carefully with your 5 questions in mind.
4. Recite the answers to your questions or write them down. You may also include important notes.
5. Review your answers and your notes, hold an on-going self-conversation around the topic.

STAGE 3

Evaluation of ideas (W-Sp)

Evaluate the nature of the eight underlined statements on pages 110–112 in terms of *fact*, *opinion*, and/or *both*. Account for your decision.

Summarising (W-Sp)

Read the article again and write its summary in about 200 words.

HOMEWORK (W-Sp)

Draw a concept map on the topic of your reading material and put related ideas in a logical explanatory sequence.

Appendix L: Extract 2 “Teaching Reading Vocabulary: From Theory to Practice”

Source: *English Teaching Forum: Creative Classroom activities* by Kral (1995:110)

Teaching Reading Vocabulary: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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RESEARCH OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS HAS GREATLY INCREASED our understanding of the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension. However, there is a wide schism between research and practice, and not all research findings or the theories derived from them are of immediate use to the reading teacher. My purpose in this article is to show how I have been able to draw upon research and theory to evolve a consistent and coherent approach to teaching vocabulary in the ESL classroom. I shall first discuss the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension and then examine some research findings and theories related to vocabulary learning and use. Finally, I shall present some examples of classroom activities in teaching vocabulary that are derived from and consistent with current theories and research.

Importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension

There is no clear evidence to show that there is a direct causal link between vocabulary and success in reading, but the relationship between the two has been strongly suggested in research or theorising by reading experts. Davis (1968) found that the factor that correlated most highly with comprehension is knowledge of word meaning. Daneman (1988) suggests that since words are the building blocks of connected text, constructing text meaning depends, in part, on the success of searching for individual word meanings. Other researchers, such as Beck et al. (1982) and Anderson and Freebody (1981), have also attested to the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension.

Daneman, however, goes further to suggest that simply improving a reader's vocabulary is not sufficient, for comprehension depends not only on the sheer size of the reader's vocabulary but also on the facility with which s/he can access the known word meanings represented in memory. Such a stand is supported by LaBerge

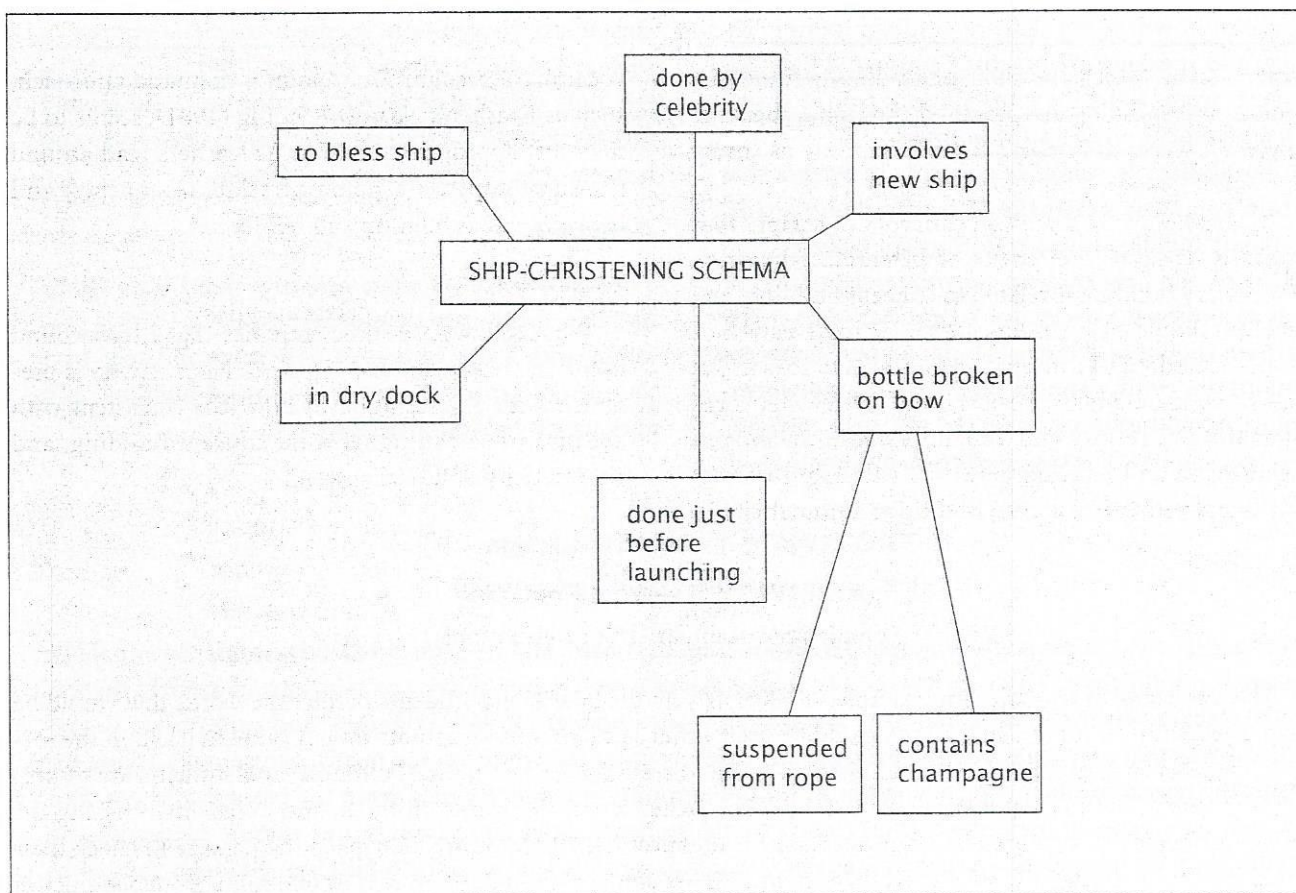
and Samuels (1974), who postulate that fluent readers automatically recognise most of the words they read. It appears that lexical and comprehension processing share the same limited resource, and automatic lexical access frees cognitive space for constructing meaning from the text (see Samuels and Kamil [1988] for a similar argument). In other words, good readers are also good decoders. Such a view is echoed by Eskey (1988:94):

Rapid and accurate decoding of language is important to any kind of reading and especially important to second-language reading. Good readers know the language. They can decode . . . for the most part, not by guessing from context or prior knowledge of the world, but by a kind of automatic identification that requires no conscious cognitive effort. It is precisely this "automaticity" that frees the minds of fluent readers of a language to think about and interpret what they are reading [my emphasis].

Script theory and semantic network

Besides the importance of automaticity of lexical access, research on human memory also has pedagogical implications on vocabulary teaching. It has been postulated that our experience of the world is stored in "scripts" (Schank and Abelson 1977) or schemata (Rumelhart 1980) of related events in the human memory. Thus our knowledge of what goes on in a ship-christening ceremony, for example, will be stored in the human mind in a semantic network of interrelated events, which could look something like the figure on the following page.

Since the various components of a script or schema are arranged in a network of interrelated concepts, and since words are actually labels for concepts (Johnson and Pearson 1984), we can assume that words, too, are stored in semantically related networks. Cornu (1979, cited in Carter 1987), for example, reports that research has shown that individuals tend to recall words accord-



ing to the semantic fields in which they are conceptually mapped. Henning (1973, cited in White 1988) also finds that advanced students remember words that are stored in semantic clusters, while low-proficiency learners tend to recall words on the basis of their sounds (i.e., in acoustic clusters). Stanovich (1981) refines the idea through his concept of spreading activation in which semantically related forms arranged in a network are activated or made available automatically. In other words, good readers "store" their knowledge of vocabulary in semantically related networks. The activation of a word in a network will automatically "activate" other related words, which will then aid comprehension. I find it useful to regard these activated and interrelated words as "soldiers," all ready to help the reader "attack" a text s/he is reading. Such activated words also help students in making predictions and anticipations about the text they are reading, a view that is in line with current views of reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman 1976). A simple experiment that teachers could try out in class is to write a word, say, *dog*, on the board and ask students to spontaneously come up with other words related to it. The possibility of such words

as *bark*, *whine*, *tail*, etc., appearing should be obvious.

Johnson and Pearson (1984) suggest three broad categories of basic words necessary for reading comprehension: high-frequency sight words (words that occur so frequently in printed matter that they are essential for fluent reading), selection-critical words (vocabulary items that are absolutely necessary to the understanding of a particular selection), and old words/new meanings (words with multi-meanings). The selection-critical words are especially relevant to the notion of schema-related words.

Pedagogical implications

The above insights and findings could form the basis of two practical guidelines for the ESL/EFL teacher in the teaching of vocabulary for reading.

1. Automatic recognition of words is vital in reading comprehension. The reading teacher should not be content with merely increasing the size of learners' vocabulary through such activities as explaining or making learners memorise from a mono- or bilingual vocabulary list. Instead, teachers should adopt activities that will help reinforce and recycle vocabulary to facilitate automatic lexical access. A total language

experience in which the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are practised through a thematic approach seems to be the most efficient way of ensuring lexical repetition and reinforcement.

2. Vocabulary is stored as concepts in scripts that contain semantic networks of interrelated words. Vocabulary building is related to concept building, and teachers should help students organize information or words according to concepts or topics. Activities in the classroom should help learners build up new networks or maintain, refine, and expand existing networks. Reinforcing and refining networks will help to facilitate fluency in lexical access, leading to automaticity in

vocabulary recognition. Again, a thematic approach, such as Krashen's Narrow Reading (1981), seems to be the most appropriate activity. As learners read around the same topic, a schema of related concepts, and hence words, is built up and reinforced.

Activities

What follows are some activities that I have found useful in vocabulary development. Each activity is presented with a description of how it is consistent with the idea of semantic network, concept building, and automaticity of lexical access.

ACTIVITY 1—Word Prediction

(predicting vocabulary from a given topic)

The teacher writes a topic (for example, "Pollution") on the board, and students predict the words that would be associated with the topic. This activity could be used either as a pre-reading activity or as a game in itself. In the former, the teacher tells the students that they are going to read a passage on, say, "Pollution" and students are to predict the words that may appear in the passage. The teacher writes the words on the board, occasionally asking the students the reason for their choice of words or for the meaning. Students are then given the passage to check their prediction. As a game in itself, the teacher could give the students about 30 seconds to one minute (depending on the proficiency of the students) to generate as many words as possible related to the topic given. Students then compare their words in pairs or as a class, explaining or defending their choice of words. An important element in both activities is that students should be encouraged to explain why they have predicted the words. By explaining their choice of words they are not only refining their understanding of the words but also activating other words in the schema related to the words in question, thus "automatising" their knowledge of lexical co-occurrence.

As a variation, students can be given the title or topic of a reading text and an accompanying list of words. The students then go through the list in pairs or as a class, predicting whether each word would appear in the reading text, giving reasons for their choice. An example is given below:

You are going to read a passage on housing styles and climatic conditions. Before reading it, decide which of the following words you would expect to find in the passage. Compare your list with your partner's, giving reasons for your choice.

materials	shelter	hostile climate
shape	heat	war
dwelling	warm	cold
igloos	drugs	cool
interior	exterior	breezes
positioning	kill	structure
comfort	humid	pollutes

From experience, I find that this activity, besides its value as a pre-reading activity in activating background knowledge and arousing curiosity, also provides opportunity for purposeful discussion of the words. Vocabulary learning here is seen as a means to an end. The students need to define their understanding of the words before they can decide whether or not to rule out the possible occurrence of those words in the passage.

ACTIVITY 2—Word Prediction

(predicting topic from given vocabulary)

This activity is a variation of the first one. The teacher writes down some key words related to a topic and students are asked to predict the topic. Students are asked, for example, to predict the topic from the following words:

wild animals	plants
species	disappear
hunters	shoot and trap
kill	lose their habitat
rare animals	laws
scientists	breed
multiply	parks
conservation	nature
natural parks	plant-research stations

After the students have predicted the topic, they can be asked to predict other words related to it. Again, this activity can be used as a pre-reading activity or as a game in itself. Like the first one, this activity helps to activate existing words in the students' schema, thereby reinforcing existing semantic networks and facilitating automatic lexical access. Personal experience also shows that students very naturally refer to the dictionary or consult their peers for the meanings of unfamiliar words.

One possible variation to this activity is to reveal the words one by one on a transparency (or to write them down one by one on the board) and ask the students to guess what the topic could be after each word, revising or improving on their guesses as more words are revealed.

ACTIVITY 3—The Odd Man Out

This is a frequently used activity in that students have to select the odd word that does not fit into a list, giving reasons for their choice.

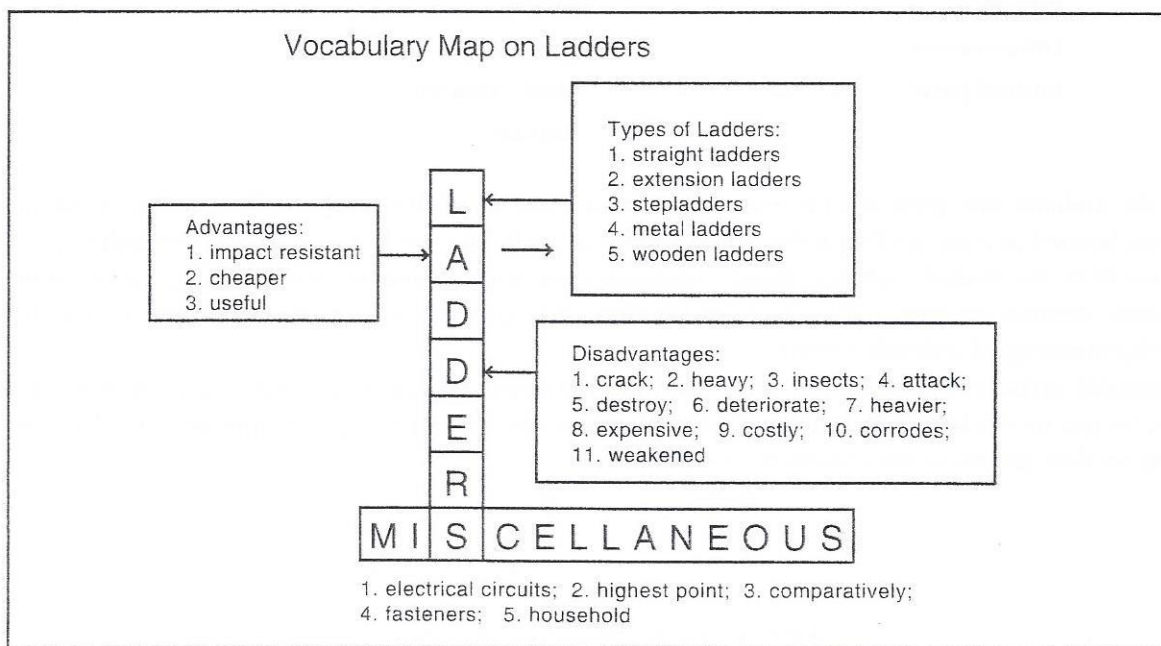
<i>E.g.:</i> house	dwelling	space	shelter
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It should be pointed out that what is important is not so much the "correct" answer but the discussion on the choice of the answers. (Rivers [1981], in fact, suggests that word lists with more than one possible answer be used to stimulate discussion.) The discussion focuses the students' attention not only on the meaning of the words but also on the relationship among them, thereby increasing their knowledge of collocation and lexical range. Flexibility of answers and pair or group work to facilitate discussion are thus crucial aspects of this activity.

ACTIVITY 4—Vocabulary Map

I use this activity as an end-of-unit exercise (each unit could take between one to three weeks) after students have carried out reading, listening, speaking, and writing tasks revolving around a common theme or topic (e.g., “energy”). Students are asked to say aloud any words they can think of or remember related to the topic they have covered in the unit while the instructor writes them on the board. When sufficient words, especially key words related to the topic, have been mentioned, the teacher asks the students to draw a vocabulary map by grouping the words under suitable headings or categories. Students are allowed to add new words not indicated on the board. Again, group work and discussion should be encouraged in this activity. I also find it useful to allow students, as a last resort, to include a “miscellaneous” heading for words that do not seem to “belong” to any category, provided that the list does not become the longest of all! Two examples of a vocabulary map prepared by my students working in groups follow. Note the creative presentation of the first, which is a result of negotiation among the group members.

The practice this activity provides in helping students store words in semantic clusters of interrelated words is obvious. (See Johnson and Pearson [1984] for a detailed discussion of vocabulary maps.)



Vocabulary Map on Aeroplanes

<u>Building</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Parts</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
airport	pilot	wings	push	similar
runway	passengers	jet engine	pull	air
	stewardess	propeller	landing	
		tyres	turn	
		fuselage	curve	
		cockpit	lift up	
			take off	
			wobbling	

ACTIVITY 5—\$20,000 Pyramid Game

This vocabulary game is derived from the popular \$20,000 Pyramid Game show on television. I carry out this activity review after several units have been covered. As preparation for the game, I “collect” key words in two sets of seven words each after each unit. After two units I would have two sets of word lists like the examples that follow.

The choice of words will depend on the instructor’s knowledge of the students (their proficiency, their current command of active and passive vocabulary related to the topic, etc.) and Johnson and Pearson’s three categories of basic words. Before the activity, the students are told that they will play a vocabulary game that entails review of some key words related to all the themes/topics that they have covered. The class is then divided into two teams, A and B. The procedure is as follows.

1. One representative from each team will be given a piece of paper with seven words related to a theme or topic (set A for team A and set B for team B). The topic will be read aloud by the instructor.

2. The representative, who will be standing in front of the class, will be given two minutes (or one minute for more proficient students) to get his/her team members to guess all the seven words.

3. One point will be given to the team for each word correctly guessed.

4. The representative should only provide verbal clues and/or use gestures. S/he is not allowed to mention the word, the beginning letter of the word, or the number of letters in the word.

5. The representative must begin his/her clues by mentioning the word number that s/he is attempting. (Example: “Word number 5. This word means ‘not enough.’ You know, when you don’t have enough water you can also say there is a . . . of water.”)

6. If the team cannot guess the word or if the representative does not know the meaning of the word, s/he can say “Pass” and go on to the next word. S/he can return to a word that has been “passed” if there is still time.

7. The opposing team must keep quiet while the other team is guessing. However, the opposing team will be given a chance to guess those words that the other team could not when the time is up. The (opposing) team will win one point for each word it can guess. (At the end of the two minutes the instructor will mention the word number that was wrongly guessed so that the opposing team can attempt its own guess. S/he can repeat one or two clues given earlier but should not provide new clues, as this would give the opposing team an added advantage. The team is given only one chance to provide the right answer.)

The game, besides generating excitement and fun, serves to activate existing schema and words related to the schema. It does more than review the seven words in the list. As students give “wrong” guesses, they are actually activating other words related to the topic, thereby refining their semantic network for that topic. The representative giving the clues also gains a lot of practice in making sentences with the word (“I need a drink. I’m very . . .” [thirsty]), defining its meaning (“This word means . . .”), and providing synonyms (“Another word for . . .”).

Unit 1-Water	Unit 1-Water	Unit 2-Wildlife at Risk	Unit 2-Wildlife at Risk
Set A	Set B	Set A	Set B
1. thirsty	1. drought	1. extinct	1. destroy
2. spring	2. flood	2. breed	2. habitat
3. sources	3. lakes	3. wildlife	3. rare
4. supply	4. filtered	4. wipe out	4. multiply
5. shortage	5. treated	5. survive	5. conservation
6. polluted	6. fresh	6. disappear	6. species
7. desalinization	7. irrigation	7. threaten	7. hunt

Conclusion

The activities above have one thing in common: they focus on the process of vocabulary development (in this case, the *discussion* leading to the answer) rather than the product or answer itself. The emphasis is on the building up and reinforcement of a semantic network of interrelated words and facilitating automatic lexical access. It should, however, be pointed out that these are just some examples of how the ESL reading instructor can consciously develop his/her learners' vocabulary to improve reading comprehension. They are not meant to form the central part of a reading programme, for nothing can be more effective in developing reading ability than reading itself.

I have attempted to show how theory can be translated into classroom practice in teaching reading vocabulary. There are certainly many more vocabulary activities based on sound theories and research. It is important for the ESL reading instructor to be able to see beyond such activities and recognise their theoretical underpinnings. Only then will s/he be able to evolve a coherent and consistent methodology in teaching vocabulary that is derived from theory and research. Behind every good method there is a good theory, and with practice informed by theory, hopefully, the ESL classroom will become a more effective place for language learning and teaching.

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Appendix M: Lesson Plan 3

Learning materials: extract 3 (Appendix N)

Topic: Content-Based Instruction

Duration: 2 x 45-minute lessons

This lesson will develop the abilities in:

1. Previewing
2. Making and supporting inferences
3. Drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes
4. Making generalisations

STAGE 1

Brainstorming (Sp)

Make students generate ideas around the topic.

Previewing (W-Sp)

Imagine your assignment question on Methodology I requires you to write on the approach of Teaching English through Content-Based Instruction.

1. Build the table of contents from this reading material.
2. Which books from the list below would you use in writing the assignment? Justify your choice.

Bachman, L. 1991. *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Briton, D. M., and P. Master (eds.). 1997. *New Ways in Content-Based Instruction*. Alexandria, Va.: TESOL Inc.

Gardner, H. 1985. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Snow, M., M. Met, and F. Genesee. 1989. A conceptual framework for the integration of language and content in second/foreign language instruction. *TESOL Quarterly* 23: 201-217.

Stryker, S., and B. Leaver. 1993. *Content-Based Instruction in Foreign Language Education*. Washington, D.C.: George University Press.

Sweet, H. 1899. *The Practical Study of Languages*. Reprinted London: Oxford University Press.

Terrel, T. D. 1977. A natural approach to the acquisition and learning of a language. *Modern Language Journal* 61(7): 325- 336.

Vygotsky, L. 1962. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

White, R. 1988. *The ELT Curriculum*. Oxford: Blackwell.

STAGE 2

Making and supporting inferences (W-Sp)

1. In 100 to 140 words, write a report of the history of CBI.
2. Read the section on “Theory of learning” on page 209, and examine if there is a connection to the way you learnt English. Account for your stand.
3. Referring to CBI and the way you were taught English which one seems to be more efficient? Why?

STAGE 3

Drawing conclusions (W-Sp)

Write a paragraph in 100 words referring to the advantages and disadvantages, if any, of a CBI approach in foreign language teaching.

Generalising (W-Sp)

Read the whole selection on Content-Based Instruction and relate it to ESP in the Angolan educational context.

HOMEWORK (W-Sp)

Turn your assignment table of contents into a concept map and put related ideas in a logical explanatory sequence.

Appendix N: Extract 3 “Content-Based Instruction”

Source: *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* by Richards & Rodgers. (2001:204)

17 Content-Based Instruction

Background

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus. Krashke offers the following definition:

It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught. (Krashke, 1987: 65)

The term *content* has become a popular one both within language teaching and in the popular media. *New York Times* columnist and linguistic pundit William Safire addressed it in one of his columns in 1998 and noted:

If any word in the English language is hot, buzzworthy and finger-snappingly with it, surpassing even millennium in both general discourse and insiderese, that word is content. Get used to it, because we won't soon get over it. (*New York Times*, August 19, 1998, 15)

Although *content* is used with a variety of different meanings in language teaching, it most frequently refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it. Attempts to give priority to meaning in language teaching are not new. Approaches encouraging demonstration, imitation, miming, those recommending the use of objects, pictures, and audiovisual presentations, and proposals supporting translation, explanation, and definition as aids to understanding meaning have appeared at different times in the history of language teaching. Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) propose that Saint Augustine was an early proponent of Content-Based Language Teaching and quote his recommendations regarding focus on meaningful content in language teaching. Kelly's history of language teaching cites a number of such meaning-based proposals (Kelly 1969). Content-Based Instruction likewise draws on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, as these emerged in the 1980s. If, as it was argued, classrooms should focus on real communication and the exchange of information, an ideal situation for second language learning would be one where the subject matter of language teaching was not

grammar or functions or some other language-based unit of organization, but content, that is, subject matter from outside the domain of language. The language that is being taught could be used to present subject matter, and the students would learn the language as a by-product of learning about real-world content. Widdowson commented (1978: 16):

I would argue, then, that a foreign language can be associated with those areas of use which are represented by the other subjects on the school curriculum and that this not only helps to ensure the link with reality and the pupil's own experience but also provides us with the most certain means we have of teaching the language as communication, as use, rather than simply as usage. The kind of language course that I envisage is one which deals with a selection of topics taken from the other subjects: simple experiments in physics and chemistry, biological processes in plants and animals, map-drawing, descriptions of historical events and so on. . . . It is easy to see that if such a procedure were adopted, the difficulties associated with the presentation of language use in the classroom would, to a considerable degree, disappear. The presentation would essentially be the same as the methodological techniques used for introducing the topics in the subjects from which they are drawn.

Other educational initiatives since the late 1970s that also emphasize the principle of acquiring content through language rather than the study of language for its own sake include Language across the Curriculum, Immersion Education, Immigrant On-Arrival Programs, Programs for Students with Limited English Proficiency, and Language for Specific Purposes. Content-Based Instruction draws some of its theory and practice from these curriculum approaches. We will briefly consider the role of content in these curriculum models before looking at the specific claims of Content-Based Instruction.

The role of content in other curriculum designs

Language across the Curriculum was a proposal for native-language education that grew out of recommendations of a British governmental commission in the mid-1970s. The report of the commission recommended a focus on reading and writing in all subject areas in the curriculum, and not merely in the subject called language arts. Language skills should also be taught in the content subjects and not left exclusively for the English teacher to deal with. This report influenced American education as well, and the slogan "Every teacher, an English teacher" became familiar to every teacher. Like other cross-disciplinary proposals, this one never had the classroom impact that its advocates had hoped for. Nevertheless, subject-matter texts appeared that included exercises dealing with language practice, and the need for collaboration between subject-matter teachers and language teachers was emphasized. In some cases,

curricular material was produced that integrated subject matter and language teaching goals, such as the Singaporean Primary Pilot Project in the 1970s – classroom texts integrating science, math, and language study.

Immersion Education has also had a strong influence on the theory of Content-Based Instruction. Immersion Education is a type of foreign language instruction in which the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of the foreign language. The foreign language is the vehicle for content instruction; it is not the subject of instruction. Thus, for example, an English-speaking child might enter a primary school in which the medium of instruction for all the content subjects is French. Student goals of an immersion program include: (1) developing a high level of proficiency in the foreign language; (2) developing positive attitudes toward those who speak the foreign language and toward their culture(s); (3) developing English language skills commensurate with expectations for a student's age and abilities; (4) gaining designated skills and knowledge in the content areas of the curriculum.

The first immersion programs were developed in Canada in the 1970s to provide English-speaking students with the opportunity to learn French. Since that time, immersion programs have been adopted in many parts of North America, and alternative forms of immersion have been devised. In the United States, immersion programs can be found in a number of languages, including French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese.

Immigrant On-Arrival Programs typically focus on the language newly arrived immigrants in a country need for survival. Such learners typically need to learn how to deal with differing kinds of real-world content as a basis for social survival. Design of such courses in Australia was among the first attempts to integrate notional, functional, grammatical, and lexical specifications built around particular themes and situations. A typical course would cover language needed to deal with immigration bureaucracies, finding accommodations, shopping, finding a job, and so forth. The methodology of the Australian on-arrival courses was based on the Direct Method (Ozolins 1993) but included role play and simulations based on the language needed to function in specific situations. In current on-arrival programs, a competency-based approach is often used in which a teaching syllabus is developed around the competencies learners are presumed to need in different survival situations (see Chapter 13).

Programs for Students with Limited English Proficiency (SLEP) are governmentally mandated programs to serve especially those children whose parents might be served by the on-arrival programs, but more generally designed to provide in-class or pullout instruction for any school-age children whose language competence is insufficient to participate fully in normal school instruction. Early versions of such programs

were largely grammar-based. More recent SLEP programs focus on giving students the language and other skills needed to enter the regular school curriculum. Such skills often involve learning how to carry out academic tasks and understand academic content through a second language.

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) is a movement that seeks to serve the language needs of learners who need language in order to carry out specific roles (e.g., student, engineer, technician, nurse) and who thus need to acquire content and real-world skills through the medium of a second language rather than master the language for its own sake. LSP has focused particularly on English for Science and Technology (EST). An institution offering English for Science and Technology courses would have specialized courses to support its clients in learning to read technical articles in computer science or to write academic papers in chemical engineering. LSP/EST have given rise to a number of subfields, such as ESP (English for Specific Purposes), EOP (English for Occupational Purposes), and EAP (English for Academic Purposes).

Content-based courses are now common in many different settings and content is often used as the organizing principle in ESL/EFL courses of many different kinds. In this chapter we will examine the principles underlying Content-Based Instruction and how these are applied in language teaching programs and teaching materials.

Approach

Content-Based Instruction is grounded on the following two central principles: (as we examine how these principles are applied in CBI, a number of other issues will also be considered):

1. *People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself.* This principle reflects one of the motivations for CBI noted earlier – that it leads to more effective language learning.
2. *Content-Based Instruction better reflects learners' needs for learning a second language.* This principle reflects the fact that many content-based programs serve to prepare ESL students for academic studies or for mainstreaming; therefore, the need to be able to access the content of academic learning and teaching as quickly as possible, as well as the processes through which such learning and teaching are realized, are a central priority.

Theory of language

A number of assumptions about the nature of language underlie Content-Based Instruction.

LANGUAGE IS TEXT- AND DISCOURSE-BASED

CBI addresses the role of language as a vehicle for learning content. This implies the centrality of linguistic entities longer than single sentences, because the focus of teaching is how meaning and information are communicated and constructed through texts and discourse. The linguistic units that are central are not limited to the level of sentences and sub-sentential units (clauses and phrases) but are those that account for how longer stretches of language are used and the linguistic features that create coherence and cohesion within speech events and text types. This involves study of the textual and discourse structure of written texts such as letters, reports, essays, descriptions, or book chapters, or of speech events such as meetings, lectures, and discussions.

LANGUAGE USE DRAWS ON INTEGRATED SKILLS

CBI views language use as involving several skills together. In a content-based class, students are often involved in activities that link the skills, because this is how the skills are generally involved in the real world. Hence students might read and take notes, listen and write a summary, or respond orally to things they have read or written. And rather than viewing grammar as a separate dimension of language, in CBI grammar is seen as a component of other skills. Topic- or theme-based courses provide a good basis for an integrated skills approach because the topics selected provide coherence and continuity across skill areas and focus on the use of language in connected discourse rather than isolated fragments. They seek to bring together knowledge, language, and thinking skills. Grammar can also be presented through a content-based approach. The teacher or course developer has the responsibility to identify relevant grammatical and other linguistic focuses to complement the topic or theme of the activities.

LANGUAGE IS PURPOSEFUL

Language is used for specific purposes. The purpose may be academic, vocational, social, or recreational but it gives direction, shape, and ultimately meaning to discourse and texts. When learners focus on the purpose of the language samples they are exposed to, they become engaged in following through and seeing if the purpose is attained and how their own interests relate to this purpose (or purposes). For learners to receive maximum benefit from CBI they need to be clearly in tune with its purposes and the language codes that signal and link these expressions of purpose.

Language contains great potential for communicating meaning. In order to make content comprehensible to learners, teachers need to make

the same kinds of adjustments and simplifications that native speakers make in communicating with second language learners. The discourse that results from these simplifications is often referred to as "foreigner talk." Teachers and lecturers operating within CBI consciously and unconsciously make such "foreigner talk" modifications in the language they use in teaching, in order to make the content they are focusing on more/comprehensible to their students. These modifications include simplification (e.g., use of shorter T units and clauses), well-formedness (e.g., using few deviations from standard usage), explicitness (e.g., speaking with nonreduced pronunciation), regularization (e.g., use of canonical word order), and redundancy (e.g., highlighting important material through simultaneous use of several linguistic mechanisms) (Stryker and Leaver, 1993).

Theory of learning

We earlier described one of the core principles of CBI as follows: *People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself.* Regardless of the type of CBI model that is used, they all "share the fact that content is the point of departure or organizing principle of the course—a feature that grows out of the common underlying assumption that successful language learning occurs when students are presented with target language material in a meaningful, contextualized form with the primary focus on acquiring information" (Brinton et al., Wesche, 1989: 17). This assumption is backed by a number of studies (e.g., Scott 1974; Collier 1989; Grandin 1993; Wesche 1993) that support the position that in formal educational settings, second languages are best learned when the focus is on mastery of content rather than on mastery of language per se. CBI thus stands in contrast to traditional approaches to language teaching in which language form is the primary focus of the syllabus and of classroom teaching.

A number of additional assumptions that derive from the core principles of CBI just discussed will now be described. One important corollary can be stated as follows:

People learn a second language most successfully when the information they are acquiring is perceived as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired goal.

To justify this claim, CBI advocates refer to ESP studies that "note that for successful learning to occur, the language syllabus must take into account the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language" and further that "the use of informational content which is perceived as relevant by the learner is assumed by many to increase motivation in the

language course, and thus to promote more effective learning" (Brinton et al. 1989: 3).

Language learning is also believed to be more motivating when students are focusing on something other than language, such as ideas, issues, and opinions. "The student can most effectively acquire a second language when the task of language learning becomes incidental to the task of communicating with someone . . . about some topic . . . which is inherently interesting to the student" (D'Anglejan and Tucker 1975: 284). If content with a high level of interest is chosen, learners may acquire the language more willingly. This can be expressed as:

Some content areas are more useful as a basis for language learning than others.

Certain areas of content are thought to be more effective as a basis for CBI than others. For example, geography is often the "first choice" of subject matter. Geography is "highly visual, spatial and contextual; it lends itself to the use of maps, charts, and realia, and the language tends to be descriptive in nature with use of the 'to be,' cognates and proper names" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 288). For somewhat different reasons, "Introduction to Psychology offered an ideal situation in which to introduce CBI at the bilingual University of Ottawa, since it has the largest enrollment of any introductory course in the university" and thus was likely to "attract a large enough number of second language speakers to justify special lecture or discussion sections" (Brinton et al., 1989: 46). This course was further recommended because of student interest in the course topics and because of "the highly structured nature of the content, the emphasis on receptive learning of factual information, the availability of appropriate textbooks and video study material" (Brinton et al., 1989: 46).

On the other hand, CBI courses have been created around a rich variety of alternative kinds of content. Case studies of CBI in foreign language education report content selection as wide-ranging as "Themes of Soviet Life and Worldview" (Russian), "Aphorisms, Proverbs, and Popular Sayings" (Italian), "Religion and Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America" (Spanish), and "French Media" (French). Eleven such case studies using a variety of course content in a variety of foreign language teaching situations are reported in Stryker and Leaver (1993).

Students learn best when instruction addresses students' needs.

This principle emphasizes that in CBI the content that students study is selected according to their needs. Hence, if the program is at a secondary school, the academic needs of students across the curriculum form the basis for the content curriculum. Authentic texts, both written and spoken, that students will encounter in the real world (e.g., at school or at

work) provide the starting point for developing a syllabus, so relevance to learners' needs is assured. In the case of an academically focused program, "the language curriculum is based directly on the academic needs of the students and generally follows the sequence determined by a particular subject matter in dealing with the language problems which students encounter" (Brinton et al., 1989: 2).

Teaching builds on the previous experience of the learners.

Another assumption of CBI is that it seeks to build on students' knowledge and previous experience. Students do not start out as blank slates but are treated as bringing important knowledge and understanding to the classroom. The starting point in presenting a theme-based lesson is therefore what the students already know about the content.

Design

Objectives

In CBI, language learning is typically considered incidental to the learning of content. Thus the objectives in a typical CBI course are stated as objectives of the content course. Achievement of content course objectives is considered as necessary and sufficient evidence that language learning objectives have been achieved as well. An exception to this generalization is with the theme-based instructional model of CBI. In theme-based CBI, language learning objectives drive the selection of theme topics; that is, "there are often set linguistic objectives in the curriculum, and thematic modules are selected for the degree to which they provide compatible contexts for working towards these objectives." It is possible for theme-based courses to be directed toward single-skill objectives; however, most often theme-based instruction "lends itself well to four-skill courses, since the topic selected provides coherence and continuity across skill areas and allows work on higher-level language skills (e.g., integrating reading and writing skills)" (Brinton et al., 1989: 26).

An example of objectives in CBI comes from the theme-based Intensive Language Course (ILC) at the Free University of Berlin. Four objectives were identified for its yearlong, multitheme program. These objectives were linguistic, strategic, and cultural. Objectives were:

1. to activate and develop existing English language skills
2. to acquire learning skills and strategies that could be applied in future language development opportunities
3. to develop general academic skills applicable to university studies in all subject areas
4. to broaden students' understanding of English-speaking peoples

(Brinton et al., 1989: 32)

Syllabus

In most CBI courses, the syllabus is derived from the content area, and these obviously vary widely in detail and format. It is typically only CBI following the theme-based model in which content and instructional sequence is chosen according to language learning goals. The theme-based model uses the syllabus type referred to as a topical syllabus, the organization of which is built around specific topics and subtopics, as the name implies.

The organization of the Intensive Language Course at the Free University of Berlin consists of a sequence of modules spread over the academic year. The topical themes of the modules are:

1. Drugs
2. Religious Persuasion
3. Advertising
4. Drugs
5. Britain and the Race Question
6. Native Americans
7. Modern Architecture
8. Microchip Technology
9. Ecology
10. Alternative Energy
11. Nuclear Energy
12. Dracula in Myth, Novel, and Films
13. Professional Ethics

There is both macro- and micro-structuring of the yearlong syllabus for this course. At the macro-level, the syllabus consists of a sequence of modules selected to reflect student interests and a multidisciplinary perspective. The modules are designed and sequenced so that they "relate to one another so as to create a cohesive transition of certain skills, vocabulary, structures, and concepts." The first six modules are ordered so that early modules have easily accessible, high-interest themes. "Later modules deal with more technical processes and assume mastery of certain skills, vocabulary, structures, and concepts" (Brinton et al., 1989: 35). The internal design of the modules (the micro-structure) is such that:

All modules move from an initial exercise intended to stimulate student interest in the theme through a variety of exercises aimed at developing comprehension and the students' ability to manipulate the language appropriate to the situation and use the language of the texts. The final activities of each module require the students themselves to choose the language appropriate for the situation and use it in communicative interaction. (Brinton et al., 1989: 34)

Types of learning and teaching activities

There are a number of descriptions of activity types in CBI. Stoller (1997) provides a list of activities classified according to their instructional focus. The classification categories she proposes are:

- language skills improvement

- vocabulary building
- discourse organization
- communicative interaction
- study skills
- synthesis of content materials and grammar.

Mohan (1986) describes an approach to content-based ESL instruction at the secondary level that is built around the notion of knowledge structures. This refers to the structures of knowledge across the curriculum in terms of frameworks and schemas that apply to a wide range of topics. The framework consists of six universal knowledge structures, half of which represent specific, practical elements (Description, Sequence, and Choice) and the other half of which represent general, theoretical elements (Concepts/Classification, Principles, and Evaluation). A variety of CBI courses have been developed based on Mohan's knowledge framework.

Learner roles

One goal of CBI is for learners to become autonomous so that they come to "understand their own learning process and . . . take charge of their own learning from the very start" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 286). In addition, most CBI courses anticipate that students will support each other in collaborative modes of learning. This may be a challenge to those students who are accustomed to more whole-class or independent learning and teaching modes. CBI is in the "learning by doing" school of pedagogy. This assumes an active role by learners in several dimensions. Learners are expected to be active interpreters of input, willing to tolerate uncertainty along the path of learning, willing to explore alternative learning strategies, and willing to seek multiple interpretations of oral and written texts.

Learners themselves may be sources of content and joint participants in the selection of topics and activities. Such participation "has been found to be highly motivating and has resulted in a course changing its direction in order to better meet the needs of students" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 11). Learners need commitment to this new kind of approach to language learning, and CBI advocates warn that some students may not find this new set of learner roles to their liking and may be less than ready and willing participants in CBI courses. Some students are overwhelmed by the quantity of new information in their CBI courses and may flounder. Some students are reported to have experienced frustration and have asked to be returned to more structured, traditional classrooms. Students need to be prepared both psychologically and cognitively for CBI and, if they are not adequately primed, then "missing schemata needs to be

provided or students need to be kept from enrolling until they are 'ready' (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 292).

The role of teachers

CBI anticipates a change in the typical roles of language teachers. "Instructors must be more than just good language teachers. They must be knowledgeable in the subject matter and able to elicit that knowledge from their students" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 292). At a more detailed level, teachers have to keep context and comprehensibility foremost in their planning and presentations, they are responsible for selecting and adapting authentic materials for use in class, they become student needs analysts, and they have to create truly learner-centered classrooms. As Brinton et al. (1989: 3) note:

They are asked to view their teaching in a new way, from the perspective of truly contextualizing their lessons by using content as the point of departure. They are almost certainly committing themselves to materials adaptation and development. Finally, with the investment of time and energy to create a content-based language course comes even greater responsibility for the learner, since learner needs become the hub around which the second language curriculum and materials, and therefore teaching practices, revolve.

Stryker and Leaver suggest the following essential skills for any CBI instructor:

1. Varying the format of classroom instruction
 2. Using group work and team-building techniques
 3. Organizing jigsaw reading arrangements
 4. Defining the background knowledge and language skills required for student success
 5. Helping students develop coping strategies
 6. Using process approaches to writing
 7. Using appropriate error correction techniques
 8. Developing and maintaining high levels of student esteem
- (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 293)

Content-Based Instruction places different demands on teachers from regular ESL teaching. Brinton et al. (1989) identify the following issues:

- Are adequately trained instructors available to teach the selected courses?
- Will there be any incentives offered to instructors who volunteer to teach in the proposed program (e.g., salary increases, release time, smaller class sizes)?
- How will faculty not willing or qualified to participate in the new program be reassigned?

- How will teachers and other support staff be oriented to the model (e.g., pre-service, in-service)?
- What is the balance of language and content teaching (i.e., focus on content teaching, focus on language teaching, equal attention to both)?
- What are the roles of the teacher (e.g., facilitator, content-area expert, language expert)? What is the anticipated workload (e.g., contact hours, curriculum duties)?
- Who is responsible for selecting the teaching materials?
- Are teachers expected to develop content-specific language-teaching materials? If yes, will materials development training and guidelines be provided?
- Will alternate staffing configurations (e.g., curriculum and materials specialists, team teaching) be used?

Almost all participating instructors comment on the large amounts of time and energy involved in Content-Based Instruction and many describe it as "a major challenge. Taking up this challenge requires a highly motivated and dedicated individual - or group of individuals" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 311).

The role of materials

As with other elements in CBI, the materials that facilitate language learning are the materials that are used typically with the subject matter of the content course. It is recommended that a rich variety of materials types be identified and used with the central concern being the notion that the materials are "authentic." In one sense, authenticity implies that the materials are like the kinds of materials used in native-language instruction. In another sense, authenticity refers to introduction of, say, newspaper and magazine articles and any other media materials "that were not originally produced for language teaching purposes" (Brinton et al., 1989: 17). Many CBI practitioners recommend the use of realia such as tourist guidebooks, technical journals, railway timetables, newspaper ads, radio and TV broadcasts, and so on, and at least one cautions that "textbooks are contrary to the very concept of CBI - and good language teaching in general" (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 295).

However, comprehensibility is as critical as authenticity and it has been pointed out that CBI courses are often "characterized by a heavy use of instructional media (e.g., videotapes and/or audiotapes) to further enrich the context provided by authentic readings selected to form the core of the thematic unit" (Brinton et al. 1989: 31). Although authenticity is considered critical, CBI proponents do note that materials (as well as lecturer presentations) may need modification in order to ensure maximum comprehensibility. This may mean linguistic simplification or adding redundancy to text materials. It will certainly mean "providing

guides and strategies to assist them [students] in comprehending the materials" (Brinton et al., 1989: 17).

Contemporary models of content-based instruction

The principles of CBI can be applied to the design of courses for learners at any level of language learning. The following are examples of different applications of CBI.

Courses at the university level

Several different approaches to Content-Based Instruction have been developed at the university level.

Theme-based language instruction. This refers to a language course in which the syllabus is organized around themes or topics such as "pollution" or "women's rights." The language syllabus is subordinated to the more general theme. A general theme such as "business and marketing" or "immigrants in a new city" might provide organizing topics for 2 weeks of integrated classroom work. Language analysis and practice evolve out of the topics that form the framework for the course. A topic might be introduced through a reading, vocabulary developed through guided discussion, audio or video material on the same topic used for listening comprehension, followed by written assignments integrating information from several different sources. Most of the materials used will typically be teacher-generated and the topic treated will cross all skills (Brinton et al., 1989).

Sheltered content instruction. This refers to content courses taught in the second language by a content area specialist, to a group of ESL learners who have been grouped together for this purpose. Since the ESL students are not in a class together with native speakers, the instructor will be required to present the content in a way which is comprehensible to second language learners and in the process use language and tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. Typically, the instructor will choose texts of a suitable difficulty level for the learners and adjust course requirements to accommodate the learners' language capacities (e.g., by making fewer demands for written assignments). Shih cites examples of such an approach in sheltered psychology courses for English and French immersion students at the University of Ottawa, courses in English for business and economics offered at Oregon State University, and ESP courses in English for business, economics, and computer science at Western Illinois University (Shih 1986: 638).

Adjunct language instruction. In this model, students are enrolled in two linked courses, one a content course and one a language course, with both courses sharing the same content base and complementing each

other in terms of mutually coordinated assignments. Such a program requires a large amount of coordination to ensure that the two curricula are interlocking and this may require modifications to both courses.

Team-teach approach. This is a variation on the adjunct approach. Shih (1986) describes two examples of this approach. One (developed at the University of Birmingham) focuses on lecture comprehension and the writing of examination questions in fields such as transportation and plant biology. The work of recording lectures and preparing comprehension checks (including exam questions) is shared between the subject teacher and the language teacher, and during class time, both help students with problems that arise. A second example is from a polytechnic program in Singapore. An English-for-occupational-purposes writing course was designed to prepare students for writing tasks they might have to carry out in future jobs in building maintenance and management (e.g., writing of specifications, memos, accident reports, progress reports, and meeting reports). The subject teacher finds authentic or realistic situations that are the basis for report assignments. As students work on these assignments, both teachers acts as consultants. Models written by the subject teacher or based on the best student work are later presented and discussed (Shih 1986: 638).

Skills-based approach. This is characterized by a focus on a specific academic skill area (e.g., academic writing) that

is linked to concurrent study of specific subject matter in one or more academic disciplines. This may mean that students write about material they are currently studying in an academic course or that the language or composition course itself simulates the academic process (e.g. mini-lectures, readings, and discussion on a topic lead into writing assignments). Students write in a variety of forms (e.g. short-essay tests, summaries, critiques, research reports) to demonstrate understanding of the subject matter and to extend their knowledge to new areas. Writing is integrated with reading, listening, and discussion about the core content and about collaborative and independent research growing from the core material. (Shih, 1986: 617-618)

Courses at the elementary and secondary level

Variations of the approaches discussed in the preceding section are also found at the secondary and elementary level.

Theme-based approach. A common model at this level is one in which students complete theme-based modules that are designed to facilitate their entry into the regular subject-areas classroom. These models do not provide a substitute for mainstream content classes but focus on learning strategies, concepts, tasks, and skills that are needed in subject areas in the mainstream curriculum, grouped around topics and themes such as consumer education, map skills, foods, and nutrition.

Two critical elements are necessary in developing an approach in which language proficiency and academic content are developed in parallel: integration of second language development into regular content-area instruction and creation of appropriate conditions for providing input. Success for this model rests on cooperative learning in heterogeneous small-group settings. This entails:

- grouping strategies
- alternative ways for providing input
- techniques for making subject matter comprehensible
- opportunities to develop language proficiency for academic purposes (Kessler and Quinn 1989: 75)

This approach acknowledges that preparing ESL students for mainstreaming is a responsibility not only for ESL teachers but also for content teachers. The latter have to increasingly acknowledge the crucial role language plays in content learning.

An example of this approach is described by Wu (1996) in a program prepared for ESL students in an Australian high school. Topics from a range of mainstream subjects were chosen as the basis for the course and to provide a transition to mainstream classes. Topics were chosen primarily to cater to the widest variety of students' needs and interests. Linguistic appropriateness was another factor taken into account when choosing topics as some involved more technical terms and complex grammatical constructions. The topics were also chosen for relevance to the Australian sociopolitical and cultural climate. Topics that fulfilled these criteria included multiculturalism, the nuclear age, sports, the Green movement, street kids, and teenage smoking (Wu 1996: 23).

Adjunct approach. Parallel to the theme-based component described by Wu was an adjunct course focusing on science. Both ESL teachers and science teachers were involved in this aspect of the course, which focused on preparing students to make the transition to learning science through English. The adjunct course focused on the following:

1. Understanding specialized science terminologies and concepts
2. Report writing skills
3. Grammar for science
4. Note-taking skills

(Wu 1996: 24)

Courses in private language institutes

Theme-based courses also provide a framework for courses and materials in many programs outside the public school and university sector, such as the private language-school market. With theme-based courses, a set of themes might be selected as the basis for a semester's work, and each

theme used as the basis for 6 or more hours of work in which the four skills and grammar are taught drawing on the central theme. Such an approach also provides the basis for many published ESL texts (e.g., Richards and Sandy 1998).

Procedure

Since Content-Based Instruction refers to an approach rather than a method, no specific techniques or activities are associated with it. At the level of procedure, teaching materials and activities are selected according to the extent to which they match the type of program it is. Stryker and Leaver (1997: 198-199) describe a typical sequence of classroom procedures in a content-based lesson. The lesson is a Spanish lesson built around the viewing of the film *El Norte*.

Preliminary preparation: Students read reference materials regarding U.S. immigration laws as well as an extract from Octavio Paz's *El Laberinto de la Soledad*.

1. Linguistic analysis: discussion of grammar and vocabulary based on students' analysis of oral presentations done the day before.
2. Preparation for film: activities previewing vocabulary in the film, including a vocabulary worksheet.
3. Viewing a segment of the movie.
4. Discussion of the film: The teacher leads a discussion of the film.
5. Discussion of the reading.
6. Videotaped interview: Students see a short interview in which immigration matters are discussed.
7. Discussion: a discussion of immigration reform.
8. Preparation of articles: Students are given time to read related articles and prepare a class presentation.
9. Presentation of articles: Students make presentations, which may be taped so that they can later listen for self-correction.
10. Wrap-up discussion.

Conclusion

Content-based approaches in language teaching have been widely used in a variety of different settings since the 1980s. From its earliest applications in ESP, EOP, and immersion programs, it is now widely used in K-12 programs for ESL students, in university foreign language programs, and in business and vocational courses in EFL settings. Its advocates claim that it leads to more successful program outcomes than alternative language teaching approaches. Because it offers unlimited opportunities

for teachers to match students' interests and needs with interesting and meaningful content, it offers many practical advantages for teachers and course designers. Brinton et al., (1989: 2) observe:

In a content-based approach, the activities of the language class are specific to the subject being taught, and are geared to stimulate students to think and learn through the target language. Such an approach lends itself quite naturally to the integrated teaching of the four traditional language skills. For example, it employs authentic reading materials which require students not only to understand information but to interpret and evaluate it as well. It provides a forum in which students can respond orally to reading and lecture materials. It recognizes that academic writing follows from listening, and reading, and thus requires students to synthesize facts and ideas from multiple sources as preparation for writing. In this approach, students are exposed to study skills and learn a variety of language skills which prepare them for a range of academic tasks they will encounter.

Critics have noted that most language teachers have been trained to teach language as a skill rather than to teach a content subject. Thus, language teachers may be insufficiently grounded to teach subject matter in which they have not been trained. Team-teaching proposals involving language teachers and subject-matter teachers are often considered unwieldy and likely to reduce the efficiency of both. However, because CBI is based on a set of broad principles that can be applied in many different ways and is widely used as the basis for many different kinds of successful language programs, we can expect to see CBI continue as one of the leading curricular approaches in language teaching.

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